

No. 39

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ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY

JACK LIGHTFOOT'S GRIDIRON BOYS

OR LEADING A PATCHED-UP TEAM TO VICTORY



by MAURICE STEVENS

Few fellows could have done it, but Tom seemed to be a bundle of steel springs, and his brave effort surely saved a goal for Cranford.

Publishers' Note. "Teach the American boy how to become an athlete, and lay the foundation for a Constitution greater than that of the United States."—Wise sayings from "Tip Top." There has never been a time when the boys of this great country took so keen an interest in all manly and health-giving sports as they do to-day. As proof of this witness the record-breaking throngs that attend college struggles on the gridiron, as well as athletic and baseball games, and other tests of endurance and skill. In a multitude of other channels this love for the "life strenuous" is making itself manifest, so that, as a nation, we are rapidly forging to the front as seekers of honest sport. Recognizing this "handwriting on the wall," we have concluded that the time has arrived to give this vast army of young enthusiasts a publication devoted exclusively to invigorating out-door life. We feel we are justified in anticipating a warm response from our sturdy American boys, who are sure to revel in the stirring phases of sport and adventure, through which our characters pass from week to week.

ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY

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No. 39.

NEW YORK, November 4, 1905.

Price Five Cents.

JACK LIGHTFOOT'S GRIDIRON BOYS

OR,

LEADING A PATCHED-UP TEAM TO VICTORY.

By MAURICE STEVENS.

CHARACTERS IN THIS STORY.

Jack Lightfoot, the best all-round athlete in Cranford or vicinity, a lad clear of eye, clean of speech, and, after he had conquered a few of his faults, possessed of a faculty for *doing things* while others were talking, that by degrees caused him to be looked upon as the natural leader in all the sports Young America delights in—a boy who in learning to conquer himself put the power into his hands to wrest victory from others.

Tom Lightfoot, Jack's cousin, and sometimes his rival; though their striving for the mastery was always of the friendly, generous kind. Tom was called the "Book-Worm" by his fellows, on account of his love for studying such secrets of nature as practical observers have discovered and published; so that he possessed a fund of general knowledge calculated to prove useful when his wandering spirit took him abroad into strange lands.

Ned Skeen, of impulsive, nervous temperament, but a good friend of Jack's.

Nat Kimball, an undersized fellow, whose hobby was the study of *jiu-jitsu*, and who had a dread of germs.

Lafe Lampton, a big, hulking chap, with an ever present craving for something to eat. Lafe always had his appetite along, and proved a staunch friend of our hero through thick and thin.

Phil Kirtland, leader of the Academy boys, and Jack's rival in all sports.

Brodie Strawn, Kate's brother and Phil's backer.

Tim Tewksbury, a rowdy belonging to Mildale, who had once served a term in the "pen," and was in training for a second dose.

Greg Silver, Anson Hogg, Bud Toliver, three members of the Mildale football eleven.

The Gambrells, a pair of young rascals, ready for any ill deed if there was money in it.

Millard Rice, captain of the Mildales, and a clever, clean player.

Katie Strawn, a girl whose good opinion Jack desired.

Kitty Toliver, Bud's sister, and a chum of Kate Strawn.

CHAPTER I.

KATE STRAWN'S DISCOVERY.

Kate Strawn was not only exceedingly popular in Cranford, but in the surrounding towns wherever she was known.

Everywhere she had friends among the young people; for she was not only a beautiful girl, but a girl of kindly and pleasant disposition, who made friends and kept them.

One of her friends was Kitty Toliver, of Mildale, a sister of "Bud" Toliver, who has figured as a member of the Mildale nine in previous stories.

Kitty was one of her newer acquaintances—a girl of about Kate's own age, lively and full of fun.

Kate did not think highly of Bud Toliver, chiefly because of some tricks he had played against the Cranford nine during the baseball season, but she did think highly of Kitty.

She had gone up to Mildale for a visit with Kitty, and sat in Kitty's room, one afternoon, looking out at

the river, where the dam backed up the water and poured it like a small Niagara into the stream below.

This was the Laurel River, emptying into the upper end of Cranford Lake. It gave good water power at this point, and the result was the mills at Mildale.

As Kate sat alone in Kitty's room, with the window open, she heard voices in the yard below, and, looking down, saw Bud Toliver and some other young fellows who had just come up the street and entered the yard.

Bud and his companions came on into the house, and she heard them in the lower hall, and then ascending the stairs.

Kate knew these youths by sight.

They were, in addition to Bud Toliver, Greg Silver, Anson Hogg and Tim Tewksbury.

And she did not like one of them.

Tim Tewksbury was the young scoundrel who had gotten into trouble with Jack early in the spring and had tried to fire the gym at Cranford.

He had served a short term in prison, but was now out again.

"I shouldn't think Kitty's brother would associate with such a rascal," was Kate's thought.

The other boys had done nothing criminal, so far as she knew, but she liked them no better for that. They had gone as near the criminal line as they dared on more than one occasion, in their efforts to get the better of Jack Lightfoot's nine.

In that nine was Kate's brother, Brodie, her good friend Phil Kirtland, with other young fellows of whom she thought rather highly, together with Jack himself, who, it needs hardly be said, held the highest place of all in her estimation.

The young fellows came softly upstairs and into a room across the hall.

This was Bud's room, and she heard the door close on them.

She was thinking again of the pretty picture made by the dam and the waterfall, with the hills beyond still showing some of the color of autumn.

Suddenly Kate was startled. The transom above the door of the room the young fellows had entered was partly open, and, Kate's door being also slightly ajar, their talk floated to her quite distinctly.

She discovered that they did not know she, or anyone, was there, and they were talking about "doing up" the Cranford eleven.

Kate's first impulse was to leave the room, for she abhorred an eavesdropper.

She was half out of her chair, but sank back, when

those words, showing they meant to "do up" Cranford, floated to her.

"'Sh!' she heard Tewksbury caution.

"Oh, there's no one on this floor," said Bud, recklessly. "Kate Strawn and Kitty went out for a walk a while ago. I saw them."

Kate had gone out for a walk with Kitty; but she had returned, which was a thing Bud did not know.

"Brodie is one of the fellows we've got to be afraid of," was the next thing that reached her.

Kate sat in her chair by the window, trembling.

"Yes, he's a slugger," said Anson Hogg. "A regular bull, when it comes to driving through a line. We'll have to get him out of the way, somehow."

"And Lafe's another," said Greg Silver. "Those four fellows—Lafe and Brodie, and Bob Brewster and Saul Messenger—are terrors. They're so big and strong, you know. Why, Tidewater simply couldn't hold 'em back, Saturday."

"Well, you can't break up the whole eleven, and then expect 'em to play," said Tewksbury.

Greg Silver laughed.

"They're pretty well smashed up already, I think."

"How's that?"

"Well, you see," said Silver, speaking to Tewksbury, who apparently had not witnessed the football game of Saturday between Tidewater and Cranford, "they lamed up some of their men in the scrimmages."

"I'd like to have seen that game!"

"It was a hot one, you bet! Cranford gave Tidewater a surprise, I tell you. They thought they had a rush line which Cranford couldn't handle, but they found out different."

"And Tidewater's rush line is heavier than ours," said Anson.

"I don't know about that," Toliver corrected.

"I tell you it is," Silver insisted; "a good deal heavier."

"I don't believe it."

"Well, but you were going to say something," cut in Tewksbury.

"Yes, Cranford got some of her men knocked out, and knocked out bad. Wilson Crane, their quarterback, twisted his ankle; and he's their best runner. Connie Lynch, their center, got a lame shoulder. And Reel Snodgrass hurt his leg, I guess. Anyway, he had a bad limp after the game. And I was told that Phil Kirtland had hurt his wrist."

"Seems as if Tidewater was murdering them!"

"But you'd ought to have seen Tidewater!" said Silver, almost enthusiastically. "Why, when that

eleven got together after the game it made me think of a ward in a hospital."

Kate Strawn still sat by the window, trembling. Her face was pale and she showed every indication of extreme nervousness.

But she had conquered her desire to fly from the room. Even if this was eavesdropping, she wanted now to hear every word. So her ears were alert; and, though she seemed at times to be looking out at the tumbling water, she really did not notice it.

She had been anxious for Kitty Toliver to return. Kitty had tarried downtown, to make some purchases. Now Kate wished she might remain downtown until these boys got through talking. For she was resolved to learn everything she could.

Though it still seemed wrong to her, to thus hear the talk of Bud and the others, in Kitty Toliver's home, while they did not know she was near by, she maintained her seat and her air of listening determination.

"I wandered over there on purpose to see how the game went," said Silver; "for I thought if anything happened we'd want to know it, so that we could take advantage of it. We're to play Cranford day after tomorrow here, you know."

"Those fellows won't be in condition again by that time," declared Hogg.

"You bet they won't! They'll may be worse than than right after the game."

Silver turned again to Tewksbury.

"With Wilson Crane, Connie Lynch and Reel Snodgrass hurt, and perhaps Phil Kirtland, too, if we can weaken their rush line, you see, we've got 'em."

"Oh, we've got to do it!" cried Bud Toliver, enthusiastically.

Kate felt that she hated him, when she heard him say that.

"But how?" asked Tewksbury.

"That's for us to figure out."

"If we could only get Lightfoot out of the way," suggested Anson.

"How's it to be done?" asked Silver. "What's your idea?"

"My idea would be to beat him to a pulp, some time between now and the game," said Tewksbury, in a hard voice, for he hated Jack.

"Who's to try that little trick?" Anson inquired, with a laugh. "I don't want it."

"You're afraid of him?"

"Well, you needn't look at me that way; you are, too!"

"Get the Gambrell boys to do it," suggested Tewksbury.

"That's the ticket!" cried Greg Silver.

Kate heard him spit his knee with his hand.

"Yes, Jim and Tom Gambrell would hammer him to pieces for ten dollars, and then light out of the county to keep from being arrested."

The reader may remember the Gambrell boys as being the young scoundrels once hired by these same fellows to hold a certain school teacher who was to be kidnaped by them. By an accident, they kidnaped and held another fellow, who turned out to be a star pitcher.*

"And they can be hired for the other work, too," said Tewksbury.

"Sure thing!" agreed Anson.

"Can the two of them get away with Jack Lightfoot?" asked Toliver, dubiously.

"Some of us fellows can be on hand to help them, you know," was Silver's suggestion.

"And we can help them in the other work," said Tewksbury. "I'd like to see Brodie Strawn laid out so that he couldn't walk for a week."

Kate's pale face turned red with anger.

"We might work Lafe Lampton as those Highland fellows did," said Bud Toliver. "You know it was said that when he got sick and couldn't play, that time at Highland, that his dinner had been doped."

"Do you think it was?" queried Anson.

"Lafe didn't think so, I understood; but others did. Anyway, he'll eat any old stuff that is set before him, and the thing might be worked. Take out Brodie and Lafe, and you'd make a mighty big hole in Cranford's rush line."

"That you would!"

"And it's what we've got to do."

"Do you think you can rely on that referee?" Tewksbury questioned.

Kate bent her head to catch the answer.

"Sure thing. He'll favor us all he can."

"Well, I don't see, if you fellows can work out the thing as you're planning, but that you can count on downing Cranford without any trouble," Tewksbury declared, with satisfaction. "I wish I was to be on your eleven."

"Why can't you be?" asked Hogg.

Kate could not see the savage look that came to Tewksbury's face.

"Well, I'm in bad odor now, you know."

*See No. 15, "Jack Lightfoot's Lightning Battery; or, Kidnaping a Star Pitcher."

"Maybe we can get you on, just the same," said Silver, eagerly.

"Then it's the understanding that we'll follow these plans?" queried Anson.

"They'll work all right. I'll——"

Tewksbury did not finish his sentence.

Steps had been heard on the stairs.

"That's Kitty coming," said Bud. "Mum's the word. Just keep still, and maybe she'll go out in a minute."

The voices died away as Kitty Toliver's boot heels clicked on the steps near the top of the stairs.

CHAPTER II.

CLEVER KATE.

Miss Kitty Toliver came on into the room occupied by Kate, who had turned to the window and was apparently looking out toward the dam.

"Well, I had the greatest time downtown! You know Jim Springer? Why, what's the matter?"

Kate could not drive that red flush out of her face, nor conceal completely the agitation that had come to her, good actress though she was.

She rose to meet her friend.

"Why, what's the matter?" Kitty asked again.

"Nothing," said Kate, forcing a laugh.

She thought she heard a smothered exclamation across the hall in the room where those conspirators were, but Kitty did not notice it.

"Well, you looked so funny!" cried Kitty.

"Did I? You startled me. That dam and those falls are awfully pretty. I've been looking at them ever since I came into the room."

"Yes, they are pretty. Well, you know Jim Springer? He's an awfully nice fellow; and he walked up the street with me, and just at the corner, you know, where the confectionery store is, he stopped a horse that was running away with a buggy and a little boy."

She held out a bag of chocolates.

"And got you these?" said Kate, smiling now, having regained her equanimity.

"Aren't they good? Yes, he got 'em for me. And the little boy that was in the buggy wasn't hurt in the least. My, I was frightened! I thought the horse was going right through that plate-glass window. Jim's awfully strong, and he got the horse by the bit, you know, and held on, with the horse dragging him. That scared me, too, for once I thought he'd go right under the horse's hoofs, or under the wheels."

She flounced into a chair by the window.

"It's too bad you have to go home this afternoon! Couldn't you stay longer? There's a girl uptown I'd like you to know; and then Art Foley—you don't know him, I guess—he asked me to introduce him to you."

The color came again into Kate's face.

"Who is he?"

"Mr. Foley is part owner of the upper mills, and he's Mr. Foley's son. I think you'd like him. He's awfully jolly."

Kitty Toliver was rattling on in this manner, when she stopped suddenly, having heard a noise in the room opposite.

"What was that?" she asked.

She was answered by her brother walking out into the hall with his companions. Having made a noise inadvertently, they now plunged out boldly, thinking that the better way.

"Oh, it's Bud and some fellows," said Kitty, relieved, taking another bite of chocolate.

She stepped to the door and looked at them as they descended the stairs.

"Did you know they were in there? I didn't."

"I heard some one in there," Kate answered, evasively.

"I'm going driving with Jim to-morrow. If you'll stay over I'll have him get a double carriage, and he could speak to Art Foley. It would be awfully jolly, with the four of us. Art would go in a minute, I know. He's asked me twice to introduce you to him."

Kate did not want to seem too anxious to go home; though, since hearing the talk of the conspirators, she was wild to leave Mildale and hasten back to Cranford.

So she sat in one chair by the window, while Kitty Toliver sat in the other; and the two ate chocolates and looked out over the dam and the hills, and talked of Jim Springer and Art Foley and of other young people in Mildale.

"No, I can't stay over," Kate answered, for the dozenth time, when Kitty insisted again that she must stay until the next day, when the two girls and the two young fellows named would go driving together.

Kate did not see Bud Toliver until noon. Bud looked embarrassed when they met.

Kate had resumed her usual manner, and, having now good control of herself, and being by nature a fine actress, she was the same jolly, pleasant girl he had met before.

Not a hint did she drop that she had heard anything, knew anything, or guessed anything.

And Bud, who had been much alarmed when he discovered that she was in the room across the hall while that talk was going on, felt somewhat reassured.

He believed that he was a good judge of character and faces, and that if Kate had caught any of that conversation he could have told it from her manner.

Which shows that he did not know Kate Strawn.

Toward him she did not in the least change her manner. She was a guest in this house, and while there she would conduct herself courteously toward every member of the family. That was merely good breeding. And beyond that was the desire to conceal from Bud the fact of her important discovery.

So, though Bud watched Kate closely, she was too clever for him.

About two o'clock Kitty came out on the piazza where Bud was lounging and thinking over the matter that now filled his mind.

"Kate's going home," she said. "Will you hitch up, so that we can drive to the station? I've tried to get her to stay until to-morrow, but she's determined to go home this afternoon."

Bud looked into his sister's face.

"What's she in such a hurry for? Don't she like it here?"

"Oh, she likes it well enough, but she said she was going to-day, you know. Her mother expects her home this evening."

"That's the reason she gives, is it?"

"Why, what other reason could she give?"

Bud rose from his easy-chair.

"Say," he said, standing before his sister, "you couldn't get her to stay here until after the football game, could you? It's day after to-morrow."

"You've taken a liking to her, have you?"

She smiled at him.

"No, it's not that. But there are fellows in town who'd be glad to have her take a liking to them, I think. I just thought it would be nice for her to stay until after the game."

"Oh, she'll see it, if that's what you mean! She's coming back to the game."

"She might as well stay over, then. Maybe she would, if you'd coaxed her a little."

"Answer me, Bud Toliver," cried his sister, laughing, "why do you want her to stay? I believe you're stuck on her! And yet you seem to want to run away whenever she comes near you. This forenoon, when we came out into the back yard together, you simply scooted. Why do you do that, if you like her?"

Bud's face had grown red.

His sister shook her finger at him, merrily, and that made it redder.

"Have a care," she warned, "or you'll get Jack Lightfoot after you!"

"I'm not caring for Jack Lightfoot, nor for Kate Strawn, either, only I thought it would be nice for her if she stayed here till after the game."

He was hopelessly embarrassed.

"Oh, I see through you, Bud! You're another one of her victims! I warn you to look out for Jack Lightfoot. I believe she thinks a lot of him, and maybe that's why she's in such a hurry to get back to Cranford. That would be my guess, if I was guessing."

Bud was very anxious that Kate should not go to Cranford. But, he reflected, if she knew anything, she could communicate it to Brodie and Jack by letter as well as by seeing them; so that, really, it would do no good to have her remain away from there.

Bud went to get the horse and put it in the shafts of the buggy.

When the horse and buggy were ready, and Bud had driven round to the front of the house, Kate and Kitty came out.

Bud studied Kate's face, as she came out of the door, and when she sat in the buggy. He was holding the horse by the head, and could see Kate well; and he made the most of this opportunity of studying her features.

Yet he discovered nothing, for Kate now had her mask on.

That is to say, her real thoughts did not show in her face; she laughed and joked, threw some remarks to Bud, and conducted herself as gayly and nonchalantly as if she had no burden whatever on her mind.

It was Kate's ambition to be an actress, and she was certainly a star that afternoon.

"Oh, she didn't hear a thing!" was Bud's thought, as she was driven away. "She couldn't act that way for even a minute if she had heard what we said in that room. But it was a narrow squeak. Gee! it made me feel queer, when we heard her in there, and knew she'd been in there all the time."

CHAPTER III.

KATE'S WARNING.

When Kate Strawn arrived at home, and found that Brodie was not there, the first thing she did was to send a note to Jack Lightfoot.

"Friend Jack," it said, "I wish you would call as

soon as possible. I've just got back from Mildale, and I've something very important to tell you."

Jack Lightfoot lost no time in obeying that summons.

Kate Strawn had never looked fairer in Jack's eyes than when she came out on the front piazza to greet him. For one thing, she was dressed extremely well and becomingly; and in the second place, her dark cheeks were flushed like roses and her dark eyes shone like stars.

"Oh, Jack," she said, "I've got some most important news about the eleven at Mildale! Come right in, and I'll tell you about it."

She was telling him before he was fairly in the house.

"They're going to whip you and Brodie so that you won't be able to play on the eleven, and they're going to drug Lafe, and use up the eleven generally."

"That so?" said Jack, following her into the parlor, after she had taken his hat. "How're they going to do those pleasant things?"

She sat down with him by the window looking out on the street, and told him all she had heard, and how she had heard it.

Jack knew that her discovery was important, before she was half through with her story.

"Kate, you're a trump!" he cried, enthusiastically. "We'll have to elect you a member of the eleven, or make you the mascot, or something."

She laughed.

"The eleven might hire me as a detective, don't you think? But, really, the thing startled me; and there's no doubt they'll try to knock out the eleven. Brodie—"

"Will be able to take care of himself, I fancy."

"But I'm going to warn him."

"Of course."

"And you'll tell Lafe and the others?"

"Yes. Just as soon as I can."

"You'll have to be on your guard all the time!" she insisted.

"The time isn't long—day after to-morrow."

Mildale is certainly the meanest place for work of that kind I ever heard of. Just see what they did last summer, in the ball games! I said I'd never attend another game in the town. I wonder what Kitty Toliver would think if she knew?"

"Now that we know, we can be ready for them. If we hadn't had this warning, and they had worked out their plans, it would have torn our eleven all to pieces."

"And put Brodie and you and some of the others in

bed, no doubt. That would be worse than to lose the game."

"Think so?"

"Don't you?"

She arched her thick, dark brows.

Altogether, with her eyes shining so, with those roses in her cheeks, and this manifest interest in himself and the other members of the eleven, Jack almost felt that he admired her more than ever. She had never been more beautiful, nor more bewitching and fascinating than that day; and she was always a handsome and attractive girl. Jack admired Kate Strawn very much; so much that sometimes he felt embarrassed in her presence. He wondered why he never felt that way when talking with Lily Livingston.

"To lose a game is about as bad a thing as can happen," he said, smiling at her. "That's just my opinion, of course. But a game lost now might put us in such a hole that we could never work out. As long as you can keep a nine or an eleven winning, that holds their courage up and makes them work better. I've found it so. It's when they begin to feel discouraged, or fear they may fail, that they're likely to fail."

"And, of course, you want the football pennant, just the same as the baseball pennant."

"We've declared that we're going to have it," he announced.

"Is your eleven going to be weak, anyway, even if those Mildale fellows don't damage your rush line?"

"Yes, it is," he admitted.

He could afford to be quite frank with Kate Strawn.

"You see, Wilson hurt his ankle pretty badly, and his father may not let him go into the game at all; and if he goes in, his ankle may go back on him right in some critical moment. Then, Connie Lynch and Reel Snodgrass received injuries, and so did Phil. I had to put in several substitutes in the second half, you know."

"But you came out all right."

She asked the question anxiously.

"Sound as a dollar."

"That's because you know how to save yourself when you fall. Brodie says that's what it is."

"Maybe it was luck," he answered, laughing. "But we'll have a pretty good eleven, even if we play some substitutes."

"Yet it wouldn't do to risk too many substitutes."

"No."

"That's what Mildale thinks—that if you have to put in a lot of substitutes they can win. But they mustn't! After that, they oughtn't to get a single

touch-down; and I hope they won't. I've just got to see that game."

"But you know you said you'd never attend a game in Mildale again."

"I take it back; I'm going to this one."

"And would have gone, anyway. Why, Kate, horses couldn't keep you away from one of the games."

"I guess that's right," she acknowledged. "Brodie says I'm a worse crank on baseball and football than even he is. I'm going to take Rex, and string him all over with ribbons. I suppose it will be too cold to take the parrot?"

"Likely. Better take Rex. He can stand any weather."

"I'll take him. And we'll win! A trick planned like that won't work, I think."

"It certainly won't work now. We've to thank you for that."

Again she flushed with pleasure.

She looked out of the window.

"Oh, here comes Brodie!"

She flew out of the room, and ran to the door to meet him.

In another minute Jack and Brodie and Kate were discussing the conspiracy hatched against the Cranford eleven at Mildale.

"We'll be ready for 'em!" said Brodie, grimly, while his dark, heavy face grew stern. "If any fellow attempts to hammer me to a pulp I'll try to give him the worst of it, now that I know what to look for."

"But they're going to double on you," said Kate. "There will be three or four of them jump on one Cranford fellow."

"We'll give 'em all they want," said Brodie, defiantly and angrily. "They're a contemptible crowd, those Mildale Yahoos."

"They are," Kate agreed. "It makes me sorry for Kitty Toliver, that she has such a brother. Kitty's a nice girl, and it's too bad."

"Her brother won't look quite so handsome after I get through with him, if he jumps me!" Brodie growled. "We'll tell the fellows, and we'll all be on guard."

"And you'd better keep close together, or in a crowd together, if you're out of the streets after night-fall," Kate suggested.

"We'll look out for 'em!" grunted Brodie. "Just let 'em try that little game."

CHAPTER IV.

THE CONSPIRATORS AGAIN.

Jack and his friends tried to "look out" for the Mildale boys.

Jack told Tom and Lafe, when they called on him in the shed room that evening; and when Lafe went homeward Jack and Tom accompanied him.

That night Tom stayed with Jack, sending word by telephone, and not venturing home alone, for there was a chance that already some of the Mildale thugs might be in Cranford.

All of the members of the eleven and substitutes were warned, and cautioned to keep quiet on the subject.

"I'm the one that's safest," said Lafe, laughing and good-humored, as he ate away at an apple. "You see, they're going to try to hit me through my stomach; and on that day I won't eat a thing in Mildale."

"You couldn't live through the day down there without eating," was Tom's answer.

"Who said I could?" Lafe demanded.

"You did."

"No, I said I wouldn't eat anything in Mildale. I won't. I'll load up before I start, and take some apples and lunch with me from home. What I mean is, I won't buy a thing to eat there—not a thing. Of course I'd have to eat something, or I could never stand that hot work on the rush line; but I'll take it with me."

Lafe always assumed a humorous air when talking about his eating.

Though all the boys were watching that night nothing happened.

Not a Mildale boy was known to have been in town.

Early in the morning the entire eleven and substitutes gathered at Jack's.

Their subject was the football game and the conspiracy which Kate had discovered.

"We'll keep in groups of two or three all day and this evening," Jack suggested. "They won't attack us if we keep together. And we won't leave the town."

Along in the afternoon it was found that some of the Mildale boys had arrived in Cranford.

Jack, who was with Lafe and Tom at the time, saw Greg Silver at the railroad station.

"Don't let him guess that we're onto this thing," said Jack.

So the three met Greg, and talked with him in the most genial manner, speaking of the coming game.

Later in the day the discovery was made that the Gambrell boys, the Mildale toughs, were visiting some

friends in the cheaper part of the town, and had been there all day.

That night—the night before the day of the game—Jack and his friends redoubled their vigilance.

Not a thing happened that night.

In the morning the Gambrell boys were gone, and Greg Silver and the other members of the Mildale eleven, who had been seen in Cranford, were not to be found.

Kate Strawn was almost disappointed.

She did not want Brodie and Jack to be attacked and possibly seriously injured; but it began to seem to her that the members of the Cranford eleven would think she had exaggerated, or had not heard aright.

She had heard correctly.

There had been a sudden change in the plans of the Mildale conspirators.

When Greg Silver returned to Mildale and reported that the Cranford players were strolling round in groups of twos and threes, as if they were afraid to be alone, that was enough for Tim Tewksbury, who was a suspicious and accomplished young rascal.

"They've twigged," he declared. "We've got to drop it and get another plan."

"Name another plan," said Greg, disappointed because he seemed to be the bearer of bad news.

"We've got to try a bold stroke."

Six of the members of the eleven, together with a number of the substitutes, were gathered, with Tim Tewksbury, in the stable behind Silver's home.

Among those absent was Millard Rice, the captain.

Rice was the phenomenal young pitcher who had arisen like a rocket in the Mildale nine; and, having proven his ability as a leader, as well as a pitcher, he had been unanimously chosen captain of the eleven that fall.

Rice was a clean, square young fellow, who would not have gone into a thing of this kind; and the conspirators, headed by Tewksbury and Greg Silver, knew it.

Hence, this whole business had been kept from Rice, and from all his close friends.

The boys who were planning against Cranford were the worst members of the eleven, boys who had made so much trouble in the Mildale schools that they had driven away one of their best teachers through "rough-house" work.

That one of these young toughs was Bud Toliver, only shows that a nice girl may sometimes have for a brother a rascal who is fast graduating in the school of evil.

Silver was the real head of the conspiracy; and Tim Tewksbury, the jail bird, was his abettor. Though not a member of the eleven, he hoped to be, and had a great grudge against Jack Lightfoot. He charged Jack with being the cause of his imprisonment, instead of honestly acknowledging to himself that it was a deed of his own which really took him to jail.

"What's your bold strike?" Silver asked now, speaking to Tewksbury.

Tewksbury's answer fairly took away Greg Silver's breath.

"Kidnap Kate Strawn!"

All the fellows stared.

"How would you do it? It couldn't be done!" said Silver.

"We could try it."

"And get ourselves into a lot of trouble."

"Well, if you fellows are lacking in nerve, we can't put anything through."

"We've got the nerve, all right; only the thing can't be done. She's at her home in Cranford, and won't leave it till to-morrow, when she starts down here for the game."

"Kidnap one of the other girls, then. There's Kate Conner."

"Nellie Conner, you mean."

"And there's Jack's sister," suggested Anson Hogg.

"There are several girls," said another. "There's Lily Livingston—I think that's her name—that came there with her mother last summer. She whoops it up for Cranford at all the games."

"If any of those girls could be captured and held, so that the people of Cranford would think that something awful had happened to them, the eleven would go all to pieces," said Tewksbury.

Bud Toliver looked at him hard. He did not exactly relish this suggestion of kidnaping the girl who had recently visited his sister.

"I think you want to break into prison pretty bad!"

Tewksbury rose up from the box he had been sitting on.

"Say that again," he shouted, his eyes blazing, "and we'll mix right here, understand!"

The light of the lantern the boys were using in the stable showed the fire of his eyes.

Bud drew back as if expecting to feel Tim Tewksbury's hard fist on his face, and put up a hand to ward off the blow.

"Oh, here, no quarreling!" cried Anson Hogg.

"Let him drop that, then!" Tewksbury growled.

"I'm out of the thing," said Toliver, in a rage. "Go on with your plans, but I'm out of them!"

"I reckon you'd tell?" said Silver, stepping toward him in a threatening manner.

"Let up on this!" Hogg commanded.

"He's mean enough to play snake, all right!" Tewksbury grumbled, looking hard at Bud.

"I'll say nothing; but I'm out of it. I'm nobody's dog."

"And I'm nobody's jail bird, understand! You know why I went to jail that time; and you and a lot of others were as guilty as I was. If I'd played low-down and peached you'd have been in jail, too."

"I didn't set that fire!"

Anson Hogg pushed in between them again.

"Here! here!" he commanded. "Drop this, will you? We're not here to fight among ourselves."

Bud Toliver retreated to the wall, but he did not leave the stable.

"How'll you work that kidnaping?" asked Silver.

"You'll have to work it out yourself," was Tewksbury's answer.

He had been made wrathy.

"But you'll help us?"

"Not if I'm to be insulted. Treat me right and I'll help you; otherwise I won't."

"I didn't mean anything," Bud Toliver now apologized.

"Well, when you don't mean anything keep your tongue in your teeth."

Then they began to talk again of how they could "get ahead" of the Cranford eleven.

Some did not favor the kidnaping idea, and it was finally dropped; yet no one could suggest anything better.

Hence, the manner of going to work to further weaken the Cranford eleven was still unsettled when, at a late hour, the young scoundrels separated.

CHAPTER V.

ON THE BEAUTIFUL LAKE.

As has been said, Kate Strawn was almost disappointed because nothing had happened.

The day of the football game with Mildale dawned cold and clear.

There was heavy frost everywhere, and the morning air was sharp and tingling. Little pools of water showed ice.

"A fine day for the game," was Kate's thought.

She stood on the piazza looking out toward the lake,

which the ice had not touched, except along the edges in the shallow.

The sky was a bright blue, in spite of the cold, and the lake also looked blue under it. It was almost as placid as a mill pond that morning.

Brodie came out on the piazza while Kate was looking down at the water.

"The lake's pretty this morning," he remarked, glancing at the blue water, and on to the further shore and the hazy blue of the distant hills and woods beyond.

"And soon it will be locked in ice!" said Kate, regretfully.

"Well, think how much fun that will bring! I was looking at my skates this morning."

"But it will stop the boating," said Kate; "and I do love boating."

Brodie remembered the remark.

At a later hour he came back to the house.

"I've been down to the boathouse," he said. "There's enough breeze for a sail, and the air's growing much warmer. If you like, I'll take you out in the boat. We won't have many more good opportunities."

Kate's fine eyes snapped with anticipated pleasure. She turned back into the house.

"I'll be ready in just a minute," she called, as she vanished.

When she came out she wore a red sweater which came well up around her shapely throat, and on her head a warm, close-fitting yachting cap.

Brodie viewed her with admiration.

"You're stunning this morning, Kate!" he declared, with enthusiasm.

"Think so?" she said, with a smile.

She caught up her skirt with her left hand, as she took his arm with her right; and together they passed through the gate, and walked down toward the boathouse.

This was the boathouse of the academy athletic club, and boats of various kinds were kept there.

Brodie, being a member of the club and having a key to the house, was privileged to use any of the boats whenever he liked.

This was one of the things which made life so pleasant for the young people who lived close by beautiful Cranford Lake.

Brodie got some young fellows who were down there to assist him in putting a light boat into the water.

In this Kate seated herself, and Brodie spreading the sail and taking the tiller, they were soon speeding over the surface of the sparkling water.

The wind was stronger on the lake, and cooler, and

Kate drew the collar of the sweater closer about her throat, and burrowed into the warm cloak she had wrapped round her shoulders.

Brodie Strawn knew how to handle a boat.

He sent it first down the lake, round Tiger Point, and in the direction of Malapan River.

Crossing the lower end of the lake, he turned along the wooded shore on the north side, opposite the town, and continued on along that shore to the upper end of the lake, near the point where Laurel River emptied into it.

The distance was long, but Brodie, liking the sport himself, wanted to give Kate a good sail this time, in view of the fact that comfortable sailing weather was nearing its end.

After a while the air grew warmer, and Kate turned down the collar of the sweater and threw back the cloak from her shoulders.

"I think I like summer time best, after all," she said. Brodie laughed.

"And next winter, when skates are ringing on the ice here, and the winter sports are on, you'll be saying that you think you like winter time best of all."

She laughed with him.

"Well, yes, perhaps I will; for I do love to skate."

"And think of the ice boating!" he urged.

"Yes; and the hockey matches, and skating carnivals, and the coasting and tobogganing, and all that. I don't know, really, which is nicer, winter or summer."

"Both," said Brodie; "both are best. Summer is nicer when it's here, and when winter comes then it's the thing. Perhaps it's the state of mind, as that woman said when lectured the other evening."

"And the fall isn't at all bad," cried Kate, her enthusiasm evoked by the lovely sail. "This is great!"

"And the football game this afternoon will be greater!"

"If you boys don't win, after all the talk those Mildale fellows made, I shall be disappointed."

"I guess we'll all be disappointed."

"Yes. You *must* win!"

"We'll make a big try for it, all right!"

"Do you think it's possible for them to carry it?" she asked, anxiously.

"Sure thing! Where would be the fun of playing against them, otherwise? They've got a good eleven. And that new fellow they've got for a captain they say is a wonder. He was the pitcher last summer, you know."

"Do you suppose he knows what those fellows of his eleven wanted to do?"

"I don't imagine so."

"Well, if he knows, and approves of it, he isn't a bit nice, even if he is a wonder as a player and leader."

She was silent a moment, looking off at the woods as they glided along.

"Do you think he's as good a player and captain as Jack?"

"To hear the Mildale fellows tell it, Jack isn't in it with him."

"I don't believe it!"

"Nor I."

"You like Jack better than you did, don't you, Brodie?"

She trailed her hand over in the water and did not look at her brother.

He was pulling at the sheet and shifting the tiller, so did not notice her manner.

"Oh, I like him well enough. Sometimes I get hot at him. But as a general thing he's all right."

"And a fine captain and trainer?"

"Oh, he's all right, as a general thing!"

Brodie turned the boat and sent it across the mouth of Laurel River, and along the shore toward the south, intending to turn again there and head back to the landing in front of the boathouse, which was, however, now a considerable distance away. In fact, the boathouse and other buildings looked rather small from this point.

Kate was looking at the shore which they were passing.

"Aren't those leaves pretty?" she said, as if to change the subject.

The trees were almost stripped of leaves. They were winrowed in the hollows, and rustled under the feet everywhere.

But here was one tree, an oak, which still held a few leaves, and they were a bright scarlet still, in spite of the time of year.

These were the leaves Kate referred to.

Brodie turned his head and looked at the tree she pointed out.

"They're low down, and I believe you could get some of them for me," she suggested.

"If you want them," he said, willingly, and turned the boat toward the shore.

CHAPTER VI.

A PLAN THAT WORKED.

Tim Tewksbury and the other young fellows who had planned such daring things against Cranford were feeling rather blue and uncertain that morning.

In the first place, they had been unable to agree among themselves upon any plan that promised to work out well.

They had gone to Cranford, and returned, and gone to Cranford again. But the fact that the Cranford boys seemed to have "dropped" to something, made them wary.

They saw that the Cranford fellows kept together in groups whenever they were out where it was possible to attack them.

As for kidnaping one of the girls, as suggested by Tewksbury, that scheme had at last been turned down, for the reason that they feared to attempt anything so desperate.

They knew that might be considered by the courts a very serious offense, and none of them seemed willing to risk becoming a jail bird like Tewksbury had been.

Besides, how to work the trick puzzled them, even if they could have agreed to try it. The girls remained close in town, and the plotters could not think of invading their very homes for the purpose of carrying out their rascally designs.

Hence the Mildale boys began to feel that if they won against Cranford that day it would have to be by fair playing.

Their young captain was willing and anxious to try Cranford in a clean, square football battle.

He was a good trainer and a good captain. He had selected his men carefully. That he did not like all of them did not matter. They were strong, lusty fellows, as well as active and wiry. They composed the best football players to be had in Mildale, and he had made the most of his material.

He believed he had more than a good chance to win that day against Cranford.

Already Mildale had taken a game from Highland, and Highland was considered by many as good a football eleven as Cranford, and some thought it much better. Cranford had not yet locked horns with Highland on the gridiron.

But while Millard Rice, the captain, was thus figuring how to win honestly against Cranford, and believing he had a good chance, these other young fellows, without his knowledge, were figuring how they could dishonestly weaken the Cranford eleven, and thus make their chance of victory a certainty.

They were not willing to run the risks of the game —the only thing which makes football or any other sport worth while—but felt that they must have a certainty of winning, thus making it a dead-sure thing, and

spoiling, if they could, all the sport element in it, by unfair and rascally methods.

Tim Tewksbury had been in Cranford all night, and the Gambrell boys had been there, without any chance coming their way.

Now they were on their way home.

They had met beyond the town, and walked along the railroad together, cursing their luck. The Gambrell boys were in a particularly ill-temper because they thought they had "lost" the money they were to get for doing their share of the dirty work.

Tim Tewksbury was in an ill-temper because he had, as it seemed, "lost" this chance to strike at Jack Lightfoot and his friends, whom he hated.

Tewksbury and the Gambrells left the railroad when some distance away from the town, and struck into the highway that ran along Laurel River in the direction of Mildale.

The air had grown much warmer, and they were carrying on their arms the overcoats they had worn earlier in the morning.

As they thus walked along the road near the upper end of the lake they saw the boat in which were Brodie and his sister.

Tewksbury stopped and looked out at the boat, some distance away.

"Hello!" he said, recognizing Brodie and Kate, though the distance was considerable.

The innate craftiness of his nature made him draw back into the bushes and wave the Gambrells back.

"It's Strawn and his sister," he explained.

Tom Gambrell laughed hoarsely.

"They might as well be in the middle of the ocean! How're you goin' to git to 'em? Swim?"

"Oh, we can't get to 'em, of course."

"He's turnin' toward the boathouse," said Bill Gambrell.

"Yes, they'll land there," said Tewksbury. "First I knew they were out on the lake."

"If we could be at the boathouse!" remarked Tom Gambrell, hungrily, thinking of the money he had "lost."

"Couldn't do anything if we was there," said his brother.

"No, I reckon not."

He seemed about to step out into the road again.

Tewksbury pushed him back.

Brodie was turning his boat.

"He's coming toward the shore."

They stood breathlessly watching Brodie's maneuvers.

"By cracky, I b'lieve he's goin' to land!" cried Bill. He shifted his feet in his excitement.

"Yes, so they are," said Tewksbury, equally moved.

"They're comin' right into that cove," was Tom's guess.

"Sure thing!" said his brother.

"Make a sneak along the road," ordered Tewksbury. "Crawl! When we get those trees and that rock between us they can't see us."

He dropped to his hands and knees, and, creeping out into the road, began to move along it toward the east.

The Gambrell boys imitated his example.

When they stood up again, rocks and bushes interposed and they could not see the boat.

"Follow me!" said Tewksbury, softly.

He broke into a run, and the other two rascals came tumbling after him, making as little noise as possible.

Five minutes later they were crouching, panting, in a clump of bushes not far from the shore where Brodie was expected to make a landing.

"Lay low, and stop that puffing!" Tewksbury commanded, though he was doing as much "puffing" as the others.

He humped his shoulders and drew his cap down over his eyes; and, lying thus, stared out at the shore of the lake.

They were scarcely hidden thus when Brodie and Kate came into view, Brodie leading the way and breaking some bushes to clear his sister a path.

"Perhaps you'd better stay in the boat," he suggested.

They did not hear her answer, but she came on.

"Do you think you can get them?" she asked, as she and Brodie stopped under the tree whose flaming leaves had drawn them ashore.

He looked up into the branches.

Most of the tree was as bare as it would be in winter, but this one bough still fluttered the colors of autumn as if in defiance of the winter king.

"I'll have to climb for them, I guess."

Tim Tewksbury drew back, and, rising half to his feet in the thick screen, he saw that by shifting his position a yard or so he could not possibly be seen, unless Brodie climbed high into the tree and looked in that direction.

"Back here!" he whispered.

When he and the Gambrells were where they were safe from observation, he rose to his feet, stripped off his coat, and turned the sleeves.

"Turn your coats," he whispered, "so they can't

know you. Lively; for there's money in this for you fellows, if we can work it."

The thought of pay was all that was needed to stir the Gambrells into activity.

All three turned their coats, making pretty effective disguises.

"Now your caps!" whispered Tewksbury, turning his own cap inside out, and putting it thus on his head.

It had a colored lining, and that further disguised him.

The Gambrells imitated his example.

"Now, have you some handkerchiefs?"

He took out his, cut some holes in it for eyes, and, putting it over his face, knotted the ends at the back of his head.

The Gambrell boys each brought out a filthy red rag which might by courtesy be called a handkerchief.

Tewksbury assisted them in arranging these masks.

"Look at me!" he whispered. "Would you be able to recognize me?"

"Not on your life," said Bill Gambrell.

"And I'd never be able to recognize you. Hustle, or they'll go back to the boat."

He led the way, creeping at a stooping posture through the almost leafless undergrowth.

Brodie was in the tree, breaking off a twig that held some of the colored leaves; and Kate was looking up at him and talking with him.

Neither saw the disguised forms that sneaked toward them.

Suddenly Kate gave a loud scream.

Tim Tewksbury, slipping up behind her, had pinned her arms, drawing them behind her back.

He and the Gambrell boys were prepared with cords in abundance, and one of these, which he had knotted ready for the purpose, he slipped deftly over Kate's hands as he drew her arms back together, and gave it a pull that tightened it.

She turned, screaming, and reeled as if about to fall, when she saw the hideously disguised youths who had attacked her.

With an exclamation of surprise and rage, Brodie came sliding down the tree, forgetting the twig he had been so carefully breaking away.

Bill and Tom Gambrell attacked him as he slid to the ground, even before his feet touched the earth.

Brodie was a fighter, and now every nerve and muscle was quivering with rage.

He tried to tear himself loose from the hands that had clutched him from behind and swung a blow at the disguised face of Bill Gambrell.

Bill dropped, without being touched, and seized Brodie by the legs.

Kate had fallen in a half faint, and now Tim Tewksbury came jumping to the assistance of the Gambrells.

Brodie was being dragged backward, fighting with all his might.

Tom Gambrell had him round the neck, Bill Gambrell had seized his legs, and Tim Tewksbury, rushing on him in front, caught him by the throat.

Brodie's heavy fist smashed into Tewksbury's face, making the blood fly from his nose.

Roaring with rage, he struck again, once more landing on Tewksbury's concealed nose.

A low oath was jolted from Tewksbury; but, aside from that, not a word had been said by the assaulting party.

Still fighting wildly, Brodie was thrown down, or rather dragged down, falling on his back, with Tewksbury on top of him, and the Gambrell boys holding him now by the arms.

Even then Brodie was not subdued.

He continued to battle like a wild cat.

Roaring madly with rage, he half rose to his feet, with all three of the young miscreants hanging to him. His dark face was almost black with swollen wrath. For an instant it seemed that he would be able to shake his assailants free.

But Bill Gambrell was still clinging to his legs, and Brodie went down, with the three boys clinging to him like leeches.

Meanwhile Kate Strawn lay in almost a faint.

Now she tried to rise to her feet.

"Get a club!" Brodie yelled at her, when he saw her lift herself.

Kate tried to obey.

She struggled to her feet, as if to lay hold of the first club she could get her hands on, then screamed when the knowledge that her hands were bound came back to her.

Brodie was still fighting with wild desperation, and the three fellows from Mildale were still clinging to him, trying to subdue him without seriously hurting him.

They did not want to injure him, for they meant to release him after the football game. If he was injured that might make it harder for them, if their identity should become known.

They were powerful fellows, almost as strong as Brodie himself; and Brodie, as the reader knows, was not a weakling.

Brodie threw himself to and fro, fought with hands,

fists, feet and legs, and even tried to get at his attackers with his teeth.

Kate tugged at the cords that held her hands, screaming wildly, her screams serving to nerve Brodie to his utmost.

But Brodie's strength was failing; and when at last Bill Gambrell, in desperation, struck him over the head with a club, Brodie fell back unconscious.

He stiffened with a convulsive shudder that made Tim Tewksbury fear young Gambrell had killed him, and made Kate scream in terror.

She started now wildly toward the boat, as if she meant to leap into it and sail it to the town for help.

Tewksbury sprang after her and caught her by the hair, almost throwing her down.

He still did not speak a word; but he drew a knife and waved it in her face.

Kate flew at him, kicking him. If her hands had not been tied, she would have used them on his eyes. She would surely have torn that disfiguring handkerchief from his face, if no more.

When she saw she could not reach the boat, and realized her helplessness, she stopped, quivering, and looked at Tewksbury, who had her by the hair.

"You scoundrel!" she cried, her words choking in her throat, and tears for the first time wetting her eyes. "You've killed my brother! Let me go to him!"

Her dark eyes flashed and her bosom heaved.

"Let me go to him, you villain!" she demanded.

Tewksbury so far forgot himself that he laughed harshly.

He took his hand from her hair.

With weak steps she ran to Brodie.

She knelt over him and looked, with streaming eyes, into his face, while the Gambrell boys drew back and regarded her uneasily.

"My, but she's a handsome tigress when she gets her blood up!" was the thought of Tim Tewksbury.

"Brodie!" she screamed, for she thought at first that he was dead.

Brodie was temporarily knocked out, but he was far from dead. That screaming of his name in his ear roused him. He half struggled up, and looked round as it dazed.

He put his hand to his head, while the world seemed to spin round giddily.

"Oh, yes—Kate!"

Tom Gambrell jerked Brodie's hand down and shot a slip noose over it. Bill Gambrell attacked Brodie on the other side, seizing his other hand.

Tewksbury again leaped in; and, though Brodie

again fought, and Kate kicked and screamed, they had Brodie snugly tied in almost no time.

"What's the meaning of this outrage?" Brodie demanded, his voice hard and his eyes bloodshot.

His brain was still whirling and his head thumping from that blow, but he knew where he was and remembered the circumstances of the fight.

He got no answer, even when he repeated the question.

"Speak!" Kate screamed at the young rascals. "What do you mean by this?"

For reply, Tewksbury caught her by the arm and marched her, struggling, toward the woods.

The Gambrells lifted Brodie and almost carried him in the same direction between them.

"You scoundrels! You low-born villains!" he raved, digging his feet into the ground at first and refusing to advance, and then yielding when he saw that he must yield if he kept near Kate.

"It's the fellows from Mildale!" screamed Kate, a sudden inspiration coming to her.

Then Brodie raved again, and fought, and cursed those who had hold of him and Kate.

But curses break no bones; and he was dragged on, with Kate, deeper into the woods.

CHAPTER VII.

THE DISCOVERY OF THE EMPTY BOAT.

Brodie and Kate did not return to the boathouse, nor did they appear at home for the midday meal.

Jack was rallying the members of the eleven and their substitutes, and a considerable contingent of friends had gathered in the street near the center of the town, preparatory to moving on Mildale, before a suspicion that anything was wrong came to the parents of Brodie and Kate.

The first that Jack and his companions heard of it was when Lily Livingston came down to the street and inquired excitedly if Brodie was there.

"He hasn't come yet," said Jack.

"Well, he isn't at home! They've waited an hour for them there and are growing anxious. They went out for a sail in the forenoon. Has anybody seen their boat?"

Norwell Strawn appeared on the scene right behind Lily Livingston. He was the father of Brodie and Kate, and was one of the prominent and wealthy men of the town, and the proprietor of the big dry-goods store on the main street. He repeated Lily's question.

"Does anyone know if their boat is in?" he asked, uneasily.

Yet he could not yet think that trouble had come to the boat, on so fine a day as that, when it was known that Brodie was so good a sailor.

"The bo't hadn't come in a while ago," said Jubal Marlin. "I was daown to the bo'thouses not more'n fifteen minutes ago."

Strawn's anxious face whitened.

"I'm afraid something has happened!"

Jack saw Mrs. Strawn walking hastily and nervously down the street.

"Fellows," he said, speaking to those close by him, "we'd better to go down to the lake and make some inquiries."

"Mildale?" said Tom, as a question.

"Hadn't thought of it," Jack acknowledged. "But — they went boating!"

"And that seems to cut out Mildale."

Jack and Tom, and Lafe and Ned, and most of the others, started at a jog trot toward the lake.

They went first to the boathouse, where they saw that the boat had not been brought in; and then ran rapidly down to the shore.

"Hello! what's that?" Jack cried.

His eyes were keen, and far away, down toward Laurel River, he saw what looked to be a floating boat. The sail was flapping idly and the boat was careening as it drifted.

"Looks as if there's been a spill," said Tom, with a gasp.

"Fellows," said Jack, "hustle out some boats; we've got to look into that."

The boats were brought out at a run.

The first one into the water was a four-oared shell, into which Jack jumped, with Lafe, Tom and Phil Kirtland, Jack taking the stroke oar.

"Pull away!" he ordered.

The shell shot through the water, with every rower bending to his oar.

The sailboat had drifted for some distance from near the mouth of Laurel River out toward the middle of the lake, propelled by the current of the river.

When the four-oared shell reached it the boys saw that it was empty.

Phil, near the bow of the shell, jumped from it into the sailboat.

"Looks as if there'd been an accident," he said, gravely.

Crafty Tim Tewksbury had meant that it should look as if there had been an accident.

After capturing Brodie and Kate he had turned the sailboat adrift in that manner, pushing it out where the current from the river would strike it and carry it out into the lake.

Jack looked at the boat and out over the lake.

"Let it drift," he said; "the other fellows will pick it up. Maybe it got away from Brodie. I think we'd better follow the shore around."

The shell shot away again, this time toward the shore, and then along it until the mouth of Laurel River was passed.

Finally the rowers rested on their oars.

They had been talking as they rowed.

All were uneasy; yet the fact that Kate had discovered that the Mildale boys were plotting against the Cranford eleven made them think it possible some Mildale rascals were at the bottom of this. Besides, they knew that Brodie was an excellent sailor, and it did not seem possible that he and Kate could have fallen into the water from the boat.

Some other boats by this time had picked up the sailboat.

The shell was now turned toward them, and, after a little, all went on toward the boat landing, with the sailboat being brought in by a couple of Cranford boys.

A crowd had by this time come down to the landing.

In this crowd was Tim Tewksbury, who sauntered along with some others who had just arrived from the town.

"Drowned, maybe, you say?" he was saying to a Cranford woman, of whom he had inquired what the commotion was about. "I don't believe it."

He hurried faster, after asking that question and making that statement, and was not far away when Jack's crew drove the shell to the landing and began to answer the questions fired at them.

Mr. and Mrs. Strawn were still inclined to be hopeful, for they knew that Brodie and Kate were both reliable and cautious. Yet they were undeniably nervous. When some one suggested to Strawn that it might have been the work of enemies of the eleven, as some such talk was going round, Strawn's face flushed slowly with anger.

"If it should turn out so," he said, speaking with deliberation, "I'll spend every cent I've got to send the rascals that did it to the penitentiary."

Tewksbury heard this, and it did not make him feel comfortable.

Nevertheless, he remained in the crowd, listening to what was said. He was not a member of the Mildale football eleven, and he seemed to reflect that some of the remarks he heard could not, therefore, be aimed at him. But he was uneasy.

Jack and others went uptown, where they made further inquiries, trying to find some one who had seen Brodie when he sailed.

Tewksbury was still with the drifting crowd, when it surrounded Jack and his football eleven, as it gathered again on the street.

"Shall we go to Mildale?" Jack asked. And at the same time answered his own question by saying: "I think we'd better let the game go by, and make a search for Brodie and Kate."

Tim Tewksbury looked at his watch, and then softly made his way out of the crowd.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MESSAGE FROM BRODIE.

Brodie and Kate had been bundled, with their hands tied, into a little hut back in the woods, a short distance from the lake.

Originally this hut had been built by duck hunters, who came there at night and waited for the early morning flight of the ducks as they passed across the end of the lake. It was well screened by bushes and could not be seen from the lake shore. Yet Tim Tewksbury had known of its existence, and had it in mind when he effected the capture of Kate and her brother.

Brodie had lapsed into a condition of sullen rage. He could not get the cords off his wrists, and they held his hands behind his back and cut painfully into the flesh.

Kate's physical condition was the same. She had cried violently. Her face was flushed and tear-stained.

Outside they heard the low talk, and from time to time the footsteps, of their captors, the Gambrell boys.

Tim Tewksbury had gone to town; but, of course, Kate and Brodie did not know that.

The time passed slowly. At times Brodie raved. Then again he and Kate discussed their situation, wondered what was meant by their captors, guessing that it had something to do with the football game at Mildale, and questioned each other as to the probable time they would be held there.

After a long period, one of the masked figures pushed the door of the hut open and came inside.

It was Tim Tewksbury, who had returned from town, fairly running all the way, as soon as he was free from observation.

Tewksbury had seen from Jack's tone and manner that the football game was off for that day at Mildale, unless something was done.

If Cranford refused to play Mildale, even though the game might be given to Mildale by default, Cranford's reason for refusing would be so good that Mildale could hardly hope to boast of a "victory."

Having reached the hut and conferred in whispers with the Gambrells, Tewksbury had written some lines in a disguised hand on a sheet of paper with a pencil.

He held this writing in his hand as he entered the hut.

He thrust it out at Brodie; and, though the light was poor, Brodie could read it.

It said:

"Your friends in town will be anxious about you. If you want to send them word you may do so. Whatever you write, if it does not reveal to them where you are held, will be taken to them, to relieve their anxiety. We don't intend to harm you. We'll tie your feet, and then release one of your hands so that you can write. No use to ask me questions, for I am deaf and dumb."

Tewksbury looked at Brodie as the latter read through this.

He held it down where Kate could see it, when Brodie finished.

"You're a scoundrel!" said Brodie.

Tewksbury did not seem to hear him.

He thrust the paper into his pocket, and, producing a notebook, tore a sheet from it, and held it out to Brodie with a pencil, still without a word.

Brodie glared at him.

"Write something," Kate suggested. "I will!"

Tewksbury stooped and put a noose round Brodie's ankles, and then going behind him untied his right hand.

The paper and pencil he had tendered lay on the floor in front of Brodie.

"I'll write it," said Brodie, fiercely, "and later I hope to see you in the penitentiary!"

Tewksbury did not seem to hear this.

Brodie began to write, and he was satisfied:

"We are all right, except that I've got a sore head, and am mad clean through. We were captured by some fellows in disguise when we landed from the boat. We are held——"

Tewksbury put his hand over the writing, as if to warn Brodie that such a statement would not be carried.

Brodie took the hint, and left the blank as it appears above; then went on:

"Kate is well. Don't worry about us. Tell Jack and the eleven to go to Mildale and wallop the eleven there out of their boots.

BRODIE STRAWN."

Tewksbury smiled behind his mask when he saw what Brodie had written.

He picked it up and put it in his pocket.

As he did so, Brodie caught him by the arm and tried to drag him down with his own free hand.

"Help me, Kate!" he panted.

Kate jumped to her feet and tried to help him, even though her hands were tied behind her back.

Tewksbury shook Brodie off, and whistled sharply, and the Gambrells rushed in.

Brodie saw that injury to himself and his sister were the only things that could come if he made a further fight; so he submitted, wrathful and raging, and was bound again.

The three young miscreants disappeared from the hut.

Outside Tewksbury took Brodie's note from his pocket and gave it to Bill Gambrell.

"Get this to town and into the hands of Lightfoot, or some of the Strawns, or their friends, quick!" he whispered.

Bill Gambrell took the note and struck out through the brush at a hot pace.

CHAPTER IX.

ON TO MILDALe.

Jack Lightfoot and his eleven and substitutes had decided not to go to Mildale, but to organize themselves into searching parties and begin a hunt for Brodie and Kate.

They still refused to believe that there had been any fatal happening, and were still inclined to think that the Mildale conspirators were responsible for the disappearance of the brother and sister.

Nevertheless, it seemed their duty now to begin systematic searching, and they were ready to begin it.

They were in their football clothing and had gone again down to the lake. The boats and shells were still in the water at the landing.

Suddenly a ragged boy came up to Jack and tugged at his sleeve.

Jack turned and saw one of the small boys from the west end of the town. That was the poorer quarter, where the friends of the Gambrells lived.

The boy held up a note.

Jack snatched it, and read it. It was the note from Brodie.

A yell came from Jack's lips.

"They're all right, fellows!" he cried, waving the note, but keeping his hand on the shoulder of the boy, who had seemed to want to dart away as soon as the note was delivered.

"They're all right!" Jack cried again. "Brodie and Kate are all right! Here's a note from Brodie."

He held it up, and fairly yelled its contents, so that all might hear.

His face was radiant. The color had come back into it. A moment before he had been pale with anxiety.

Tom took the note, and others, and the crowd surged forward to read it, all anxious to see the note itself, even though Jack had shouted its contents.

Jack turned to the boy.

"Where did you get that?" he demanded.

"A feller give it to me."

"Who was he? Tell me who he was."

"I couldn't see him. He had a hankcher over his face."

"You're lying!" said Jack, to scare the truth out of him.

"I ain't, neither!" the boy asserted. "He give it to me, and a dime, and told me to take it to you quick's I could, and I did."

He held up the dime.

"Where was this?"

"Right at the aidge of the town—right close by my house."

Jack knew where that was.

"You're telling the truth?"

Dozens were now crowding round the boy, firing questions at him.

But the little fellow was telling the truth. Bill Gambrell had been masked when he gave him the note and the dime, and the boy had not recognized him.

Seeing that the boy was speaking truly, Jack let him go.

"I got a dime, anyhow!" the little fellow cried, jubilantly. "Gee! I got a dime!"

He clutched it in his dirty fist.

"What shall we do, fellows?" said Jack, and his voice thrilled. "Brodie says for us to go to Mildale and wallop that eleven. Shall we do it?"

Eagerness blazed in his face, as well as indignation against the miscreants who had captured and were holding Kate and her brother.

A wild yell broke from the crowd, in which the eleven and the substitutes joined.

The whistle of the train that was to carry the eleven to Mildale was heard.

It was yet a mile away, and would stop in the town almost five minutes.

"Somebody ought to make the search," Jack went on. "But that can be done. Parties can go to the woods at the west end of the lake, and along the shore. Brodie is held somewhere, with Kate; and they ought to be released. But there's plenty to do that. Shall we all stay and make the search, or shall we go to Mildale?"

"To Mildale!" was the wild shout.

"If we do go, we'll wallop that eleven for this if we never win another game in our lives. They're at the bottom of this."

So everybody felt.

Jack saw Mr. Strawn, who had driven down to the shore of the lake, and was just now reining in.

Jack ran to him with the note from Brodie and put it in his hands.

"Good news!" he shouted, as he did so. "Brodie and Kate are all right! That's from Brodie, and it's his handwriting."

Strawn's hands shook as he took the note and read it.

"Thank God!" he said.

"And we're wondering," said Jack, "whether we ought to go on with the search we've been planning, or go to Mildale, as Brodie requests."

A sudden fire flamed in Strawn's face. The fighting blood of Brodie Strawn ran red, also, in the veins of his father.

"Go to Mildale with the eleven!" he said, his voice snapping. "I'll organize and direct searching parties. We'll find where Brodie and Kate are held, and I'll see that the scoundrels guilty of this consummate outrage are properly punished for it."

He looked at Jack.

"Yes, go to Mildale," he repeated. "There's the train! Have you time?"

"We can catch it," Jack answered.

It was a foot race for the train, after that.

Near the center of the town Jack came upon Nellie Conner and Lily Livingston.

"To the train!" he said. "It's just pulling in. It stays here over three minutes, and we've got time. Brodie and Kate are all right. We've got a note from Brodie. They're being held somewhere, we think by the Mildale fellows, in order to break up our eleven. I've just seen Mr. Strawn, and he wants us to go and wallop that eleven, just as Brodie does."

He caught Nellie by the arm and fairly swept her along with him.

Rex, the shepherd dog, called by Kate the "mascot," came frisking at Lily's heels. He had no ribbons on him, however. When Rex played mascot under Kate he was always strung with bright ribbons.

Rex ran on after Jack and the others to the station.

"But are you sure?" Nellie was protesting.

"Sure!" cried Jack, with delight. "He didn't say where he and Kate are, but they're held somewhere, and we know it's by the Mildale fellows. You know what Kate overheard there."

Jack had left the note with Mr. Strawn.

"Oh, it's too good to believe!"

Nellie did not mean it was "too good to believe" that Brodie and Kate had been kidnaped and were being held somewhere, but that it was "too good to believe" that nothing serious had befallen them.

She and Lily Livingston showered Jack and the other fellows with questions, as all ran for the train.

The train was almost ready to pull out when they scrambled aboard, breathing hard from their sharp run.

An electric thrill seemed to have been communicated, to every member of the eleven and their friends.

So many people clambered aboard the train that the conductor, who had been about to shout "All aboard" and signal to the engineer, stayed his hands, and permitted the last one to get inside, before he signaled for the train to pull out.

A crowd of Cranford people, enthusiasts and rooters for the eleven, friends of the eleven, and others who delighted in a football game simply for its own sake, filled the train now.

They were a lively party.

The one subject was the kidnaping, the note from

Brodie, the coming game, and speculations as to what had actually happened to Brodie and Kate.

With these were mingled threats of what they would do to the young scoundrels who were supposed to be holding Brodie and Kate prisoners.

And thus the train rolled into Mildale.

Jack and his friends had still time to get down to the football grounds before the time for the game to be called.

CHAPTER X.

THE PATCHED-UP TEAM.

Greg Silver, Bud Toliver, Anson Hogg and all the other members of the eleven of Mildale were out on the gridiron, together with their captain, young Millard Rice, who was in total ignorance of the schemes of the conspirators.

"I suppose you fellows think that's a great trick!" cried Phil Kirtland, as he and the Cranford eleven came upon the field. "But we got a note from Brodie, and we're here to do you up!"

He said it fiercely, for he was angry, and the Cranford enthusiasts crowding behind him yelled wildly.

The reddish face of Millard Rice reddened still more, and his light-colored eyes closed to slits.

"I don't think I understand you," he said, curtly. "We've been up to no tricks."

"What are you talking about?" blustered Greg Silver, looking at Phil.

"Oh, you don't know, of course?" sneered pugilistic Saul Messenger.

He had once "hammered" the face of Greg Silver, a thing which Silver had not forgotten, and Saul looked as if he longed to do it again.

"Oh, you don't know!" Saul repeated, sneering. "Some of you fellows, or somebody hired by you, captured Brodie and Kate Strawn, and they're now being held some place, in order to knock out our eleven. But we're onto the game, see?"

He glared at Silver, and apparently was waiting for Silver to say he was a liar, when he meant to jump on him, for Saul dearly loved a fight.

But Jack put a hand on Saul's shoulder.

"Not now!" he whispered. "This isn't the time.

We mustn't have a fight now. There's a big crowd here, you know."

Greg Silver heard this, and it emboldened him. If Saul was not to be permitted to attack, then, of course, he was not afraid of him.

"That isn't so," said Millard Rice, a deep flush on his face. "We're here to play clean football this afternoon. You fellows are always claiming there's dirt on our side. There's none of it to-day."

"Wow!" squalled Saul in disbelief. "Your eleven are a—"

Jack pulled Saul away.

"We'll settle this thing on the football field!" said Rice, speaking to Jack.

"All right," Jack answered, sharply. "We're ready for you."

Then he looked at young Rice.

"I'm willing to believe that you don't know anything about this. Yet it's a fact that Brodie Strawn and his sister have been captured and are being held somewhere. We got a note from Brodie. From what it said I know he thinks some members of your team are in the scheme."

"My men are all here!" said Rice.

"Yes, they are. But that doesn't prove that they've not been doing dirt."

"Are you ready for the game?"

"We protest against the referee."

"The referee's all right."

Jack took Rice aside.

"See here, Rice," he said, kindly, "I don't want to raise a row; but Kate Strawn, while visiting at Toliver's here, overheard some talk by Anson Hogg, Bud Toliver, Greg Silver and Tim Tewksbury, which showed her that those fellows were planning some devilish scheme to break the Cranford rush line; and that the referee chosen for the game was expected to favor your men all he could. I don't want to spread this all over town, for Kate might not like it, and I won't, unless I have to do it. But the whole thing becomes public property if you force me to publicly protest against the referee. We want another referee, see?"

Rice paled a little. He saw that Jack was speaking the truth.

"I don't know anything about this," he protested; "it's the first I've heard of it."

"I believe you, but we've got to have another referee."

"All right; I'm willing. I want to do the square thing. We think we can beat you fellows fair and square. So we'll pick another referee."

After some trouble another man was selected.

The spectators, not knowing the cause of the talk and why there should be so much delay, began to grow impatient and to show it by their words and calls.

But the elevens were ready at last.

Jack was leading a team that was badly patched up.

Wilson Crane was out, because he had not yet recovered from the twist given to his ankle at Tidewater.

Connie Lynch, center, was laid off because of his lame shoulder.

Reel Snodgrass had played the last half at Tidewater with a limp which he contrived to conceal, but now had a swollen knee and could not take part.

And Phil Kirtland had hurt his wrist.

Yet Phil was going pluckily into this game, saying that he was about as good as new again, though he knew he wasn't.

In addition, Brodie Strawn, Cranford's powerful left guard, was missing.

Truly, when these gaps were filled by substitutes, it was a badly patched-up team which Jack led on the gridiron.

Mildale had won toss, and chose north goal, from which the wind was blowing.

The lineup was as follows:

CRAFORD.	POSITIONS.	MILDAL.
Jubal Marlin	left end	Walter White
Mack Remington	left tackle	Jake Peggotty
Bob Brewster	left guard	Anson Hogg
Arlo Kilfoyle	center	Carl Peterson
Lafe Lampton	right guard	Sam Martin
Saul Messenger	right tackle	Luke Armstrong
Ned Skeen	right end	Bob Sullivan
Nat Kimball	quarter-back	Jim Harrity
Jack Lightfoot	left half-back	Bud Toliver
Phil Kirtland	right half-back	Greg Silver
Tom Lightfoot	full-back	Millard Rice

The chattering of the spectators stilled as Jack Lightfoot stepped into position for the kick-off.

The Mildale line had fallen back, and the players were nervous and ready for the work.

Jack's eleven thought of Brodie and Kate; Millard Rice and the honest members of the Mildale eleven believed they had been insulted and burned to avenge it by winning the game.

There was an instant of silence.

Punk!

Propelled by Jack's toe the pigskin went flying toward the Mildale goal posts.

Millard Rice was ready for it, and caught it on the ten-yard line.

Every player was in motion.

Rice tried to go round Cranford's left end with the ball.

He was a swift runner, and a clever dodger, and he had good interference—Luke Armstrong and Bob Sullivan swinging in to protect him from the tacklers of the Cranford team.

He bowled over Jubal Marlin, who missed making a tackle by scarcely a foot of space, and crossed the center line.

Here Lafe Lampton came at him in a tiger jump; and, throwing himself as if charging the dummy at home, he caught Rice low round the legs, and both went down.

The ball was down on Cranford's fifty-yard line; and here came the first lineup for a scrimmage.

The players, in stooping postures, crouching to spring at each other as soon as the ball was in motion, faced each other thus:

CRAFORD.	MILDAL.
Jubal Marlin, left end.	Bob Sullivan, right end.
Mack Remington, left tackle.	Luke Armstrong, right tackle.
Bob Brewster, left guard.	Sam Martin, right guard.
Arlo Kilfoyle, center, or snap- per-back.	Carl Peterson, center, or snap- per-back.
Lafe Lampton, right guard.	Anson Hogg, left guard.
Saul Messenger, right tackle.	Jake Peggotty, left tackle.
Ned Skeen, right end.	Walter White, left end.

Behind these two lines were the quarter-backs—Nat Kimball behind Cranford and Jim Harrity behind Mildale; then the half-backs—Jack Lightfoot and Phil

Kirtland behind Cranford, and Bud Toliver and Greg Silver behind Mildale; together with the full-backs—Tom Lightfoot behind Cranford and Millard Rice behind Mildale.

As this was the lineup for each scrimmage, if this order is borne in mind, or referred to, the reader can tell just the positions always occupied by the players when they faced each other in the scrimmages.

The ball was in the possession of Mildale.

Jim Harrity, quarter-back, called the Mildale signals quickly, almost breathlessly:

"A, n, z, y, t."

Mildale used letters for signals.

The first two letters, in this case, were the real signals, the others being called to "blind" the Cranford eleven; and they were orders, instructing Luke Armstrong, right tackle, to take the ball and drive for an opening through the Cranford center, the position held by Arlo Kilfoyle, for they believed that was a weak spot in the Cranford line.

All these plays, and many more, had been practiced time and again, so that the plays to be tried were familiar, and the signals were as readily understood as if words had been spoken in giving the order.

As the quarter-back uttered his commands, or signals, the ball came back to him from the hands of the center, or snapper-back, and he passed it with a quick motion to Luke Armstrong, after making a bluff of giving it to Sam Martin, the right guard, who stood close by him.

Martin pretended to hug the ball and ran like a hound toward Mildale's left end, with a runner with him; but Luke Armstrong drove at Arlo Kilfoyle, and, assisted by the left guard, the center, and the two tackles, tried to open a passage there for the ball.

"Hold 'em!" roared Lafe Lampton.

"Hold 'em!" yelled Jack.

Kilfoyle was hurled back and fell.

The two lines swayed and trembled.

Jack and the other Cranford players knew that the runner going to the left had not the ball, but that Arm-

strong had; they had guessed, too, that Mildale, under the command of her shrewd captain, would strike this weak spot in the line.

Luke Armstrong was a powerful fellow, and he fairly lifted Lafe, who clung to him like a bulldog. The line was too strong for him, however, even with Kilfoyle down on his back; and Armstrong fell, with the ball under him.

The referee, who had been sighting and squinting into that tangle of legs and arms, and heads and bodies, blew his whistle.

The ball was down.

Armstrong had advanced it into Cranford territory three yards.

Instantly there came another scrimmage.

The signals were not the same, and Jack thought the line would be struck somewhere else.

But young Rice was "up to snuff."

He had two sets of signals. Though these were different, they meant the same thing.

Armstrong got the ball again and drove at the line.

But the fake pass to Martin was done so cleverly this time that Tom Lightfoot and Phil Kirtland darted toward Mildale's left end, where Martin was going with another runner, pretending to hug the ball; and this weakened the Cranford line.

Armstrong broke down the center, as before tumbling Kilfoyle over; and with Carl Peterson, Anson Hogg and Jake Peggotty, all powerful fellows, he almost broke through.

"Hold 'em!" Jack yelled.

Cranford "held 'em," but another gain of four yards had been made into Cranford territory.

Again Mildale bucked the line.

"Hold 'em!" cried Jack, throwing his weight into the line, while this time Phil and Tom and the other players were where they should have been.

The line was again held.

This time the ball had not been advanced a foot.

Twice again Mildale rushed the line, making only four yards; and it was Cranford's ball on downs; for in three attempts Mildale had not advanced five yards.

CHAPTER XI.

TOUCH-DOWN AND GOAL.

The enthusiastic spectators had yelled wildly, and they yelled again, when the referee's whistle blew and it was seen that Cranford had the ball on downs.

The ball was near Cranford's forty-yard line.

To a football lover it was a thrilling sight to see those stalwart players, as they now faced each other on that scrimmage line, Mildale's rushers nervously working their hands in readiness to dash upon Cranford's interference and tear it to pieces as soon as the ball was in motion.

The Mildale rush line could now use hands and arms in stopping the progress of Cranford; and Cranford, being in possession of the ball, could only use bodies in interference.

Cranford had three consecutive formations and plays which they could use without signals, having drilled on them thoroughly.

The ball came back from the center to the quarter-back, Nat Kimball, who passed it to Jack Lightfoot, Jack being close in, where he could receive it easily.

At the same moment the rush lines came together in a struggle, with Bob Brewster, Lafe Lampton, Mack Remington and Saul Messenger, assisted by Kilfoyle, trying to bore a hole through Mildale's center.

Into this hole Jack Lightfoot hurled himself like a shot out of a gun.

Lafe sprang aside, dragging down the man who had grappled him; and Jack fairly hurdled over the line, literally walking on the tangled bodies.

The Cranford rooters were yelling again; and Rex, the mascot, wearing more ribbons now than a summer girl, was barking his loudest, encouraged by Nellie Conner and Lily Livingston.

Jack broke through the line, with hands clutching him and trying to drag him down; and though Mildale literally piled on him as he tried to run with the ball, he dragged them, with the aid of his interference, for seven yards before he went down and the whistle of the referee shrilled its call, indicating that the ball was down.

Jack had carried the ball almost back to the fifty-yard line.

In the scrimmage that followed immediately he crossed the central line with it.

Twice Jack had hit the center and almost got through and away with the ball for a touch-down.

The next play came as quickly, without signals, and the Mildale eleven believed Jack was to try again to break through center with the ball.

But—they were fooled.

They massed their men at center to oppose Jack's progress.

The ball went, instead, from the quarter-back to Phil Kirtland, who jumped with it at the weakened left end of Mildale.

With him rushed Saul Messenger, with head down like a charging bull.

Jake Peggotty tried to stop the runner with the ball.

Saul bore into him with his head, hurling him to the ground.

Walter White, trying to get at Phil, tackled Saul, and the two went down together.

Phil was now clear of the opposing players.

Jack and Tom were swinging in to aid him as interference, having broken through the Mildale line.

But across from the left of the field came Bob Sullivan and Luke Armstrong, running like greyhounds to cut Phil off and keep him from making a touch-down.

Jack, running with terrific speed, put himself between them and Phil; and Tom, who was right at Jack's heels, got in the way of Sullivan.

Luke Armstrong threw himself at Phil for a tackle. Jack was in the way, and Phil seemed to slide right through Armstrong's fingers.

The rooters were standing up now and yelling like mad, as Phil flew on with the ball, running like the wind, with nearly the whole of the Mildale line racing after him.

Phil carried the ball across the line in safety, making the first touch-down.

"What's the matter with Kirtland?" yelled Mack Remington, one of Phil's friends.

And the breathless players of Cranford yelled:

"He's all right!"

The ball was brought out.

Jack was to attempt to kick goal, in the teeth of the wind that blew briskly from west of north.

The run had been sharp, and all the players were breathing heavily.

Mildale retired behind their goal line, eagerly watching and ready.

Lafe Lampton took the ball, for he was to place it for Jack.

He held it in his hands, close to, but not touching, the ground, for as soon as it touched the ground Mildale could charge.

Jack studied the wind and the distance.

With a motion of his hand he signaled to Lafe, who placed it with a quick motion on the ground, steady-ing it in position with his fingers.

The Mildale line charged.

Punk.

They had scarcely moved when Jack's toe struck the pigskin.

It soared through the air, into the wind, veered a little as the wind caught it, then shot between the goal posts.

It was a beautiful kick for goal, and it received the cheers it deserved.

Cranford's score was six.

"Wow! That's for Brodie Strawn and his sister!" Saul Messenger yelled, pugnaciously.

CHAPTER XII.

IN THE THICK OF THE BATTLE.

Mildale chose to kick-off.

They had the privilege, if they wished, of requiring Cranford now to kick-off.

But the wind favored them in a kick-off toward the Cranford goal.

Greg Silver kicked off this time, driving the ball, with the favoring wind, down to Cranford's ten-yard line.

Jack Lightfoot caught it there and sent it back with a tremendous punt that lifted it to Mildale's twenty-five-yard line.

Millard Rice caught the ball on the fly, making a "fair catch."

Instantly he planted his heel in the ground at the spot where the catch was made.

This entitled him to a free kick; a thing very desirable for him just then, for several of the Cranford players were dashing at him when he made the catch, and he would hardly have been given time to run with the ball or to make a good punt.

Mildale could not come now within ten yards of the mark made by Rice's heel; while he and his side had the privilege of retiring such a distance toward the Mildale goal as he pleased, and from that point could make a punt or a drop, or give the ball to some one of his own side for a place kick.

Millard Rice and his men did not, however, retire far back of the spot where he had jabbed down his heel.

While falling back, with Cranford eagerly watching him and ready to thwart, if possible, whatever move-ment he made, he dropped the ball and lifted it with his toe for a punt, driving it with the wind.

It was so great a drive that but for Jack, who had fallen back to be ready for it, and who sprang into the air with a wild-cat leap, it would have been driven be-tween the goal posts.

Millard Rice was certainly a phenomenal young player, as good in his field at Mildale as Jack was in his at Cranford.

Jack Lightfoot had the ball, and he ran with light-ning speed with it, Saul Messenger, Ned Skeen and Tom Lightfoot running with him, and making an al-most invulnerable interference.

Again the enthusiastic spectators were roaring.

Football field and lookers-on seemed to have gone mad. Everything was in motion.

Jack dodged and ducked to escape two would-be tacklers.

Tom went down with one, falling and dragging the fellow down.

Jack sped on with Saul and Ned Skeen, being driven toward the right side line.

Others of his side were running toward the Mildale goal to help him as he drew in toward it.

Jack increased his speed.

Ned Skeen dropped behind, for he could not run like Jack; but one of the would-be tacklers went down with him.

Jack ran almost the whole length of the field, and but for Armstrong and Peggotty, who had stood back as goal defenders and were ready for him, barring his way, he would have gone through with the ball.

He was forced off the side line within fifteen yards of the goal line; and the ball was down.

The ball was brought back in bounds, at the point where it crossed the line, and was carried fifteen yards into the gridiron. It must be carried at least five and not more than fifteen.

"Fifteen yards!" Jack had announced before bringing the ball in, as the rules require.

Here, on the fifteen-yard line, and fifteen yards from the right side line, came the lineup.

Jack dropped back, as the lines faced each other; and the ball coming to him, he made a quick drop-kick, while the interference held back the rush line of Mildale.

The kick was almost into the teeth of the wind, and the time given was brief; but Jack kicked the ball successfully between the goal posts.

Cranford had scored four more, and now had ten to its credit.

"Wow!" yelled Saul Messenger, looking as if he wanted to eat some of the opposition. "That's for Brodie and his sister."

"How's good old Jack Lightfoot?" shouted Lafe.

The answer rang across the gridiron, in a great burst of sound:

"He's all right."

The sides began to return to the center of the field for another kick-off, even though they knew the thirty minutes was nearly at an end.

But before the kick-off came the whistle blew.

The first half had been played.

"Oh, fellows, we've got 'em!" Jack declared to his men, as the tired eleven lay about on the ground at the end of their strenuous work.

Yet Jack seemed to be "counting his chickens before they were hatched."

Soon after that, in a scrimmage, Phil Kirtland's already weakened wrist played out, becoming so sore that Phil had to drop out of the game, which he did reluctantly.

Jack put in Bill Brewster as substitute.

Bill was a poor player, though a good fellow. A little later Ned Skeen, smothered under a heap of bodies, was found breathless and unconscious when the tangle unwound.

Jack put in another substitute, while the Cranford girls, taking Ned into their care, tried to make him comfortable, though he was trembling and white as a sheet when he came fully to himself.

"Tear 'em to pieces!" yelled Millard Rice.

He, like Jack, was doing the work of two men.

"Tear 'em open!" he ordered.

He hurdled the line, walking over Lafe and Bob Brewster, who clung to his legs, though they had been hurled down.

Jack stopped him with a clean tackle, just as he cleared the line.

Then Greg Silver got the ball. Breaking through Cranford's weakened right end, he came near crossing the line, but was tackled and downed by Tom Lightfoot.

The ball shot out of Silver's hands here. Tom had it, and it was Cranford's.

Tom fell back in the next scrimmage and punted.

But the Mildale nine broke through, so that Tom's punt was a poor one, and a Mildale player got the ball.

There was a wild mix-up, and out of the whirling ruck Millard Rice shot like a comet with the ball.

Cranford tried to head him off, but he crossed the line and made a touch-down.

The ball was brought out for a kick for goal.

Greg Silver tried it.

Punk.

The ball shot for the goal posts.

Tom Lightfoot went into the air with a wild leap and clutched it.

Few fellows could have done it, but Tom seemed to be a bundle of steel springs, and his brave effort surely saved that goal.

But Mildale had made five.

The scores were now, ten for Cranford, and five for Mildale.

Millard Rice had so far put in three substitutes, but he himself seemed, like Jack, worth a dozen men.

Rice again got the ball, on a fumble, and again he broke through, running like a deer, and once more crossed the lines.

This touch-down was followed by another goal.

Mildale now had eleven, and Cranford ten.

Mildale was ahead!

"We can win, fellows!" cried Rice, his voice tingling with feeling. "Fellows, we can do it, and we must do it!"

He stirred his eleven, for his voice rang out like a bugle.

CHAPTER XIII.

BRODIE AND KATE.

Has the reader forgotten Brodie Strawn and his sister?

When Brodie found that raging and raving was but spending his strength uselessly, he subsided.

Kate had stopped her crying, for she, too, realized that tears were useless and weakening.

They discussed their situation, and talked of the game to be played—that was even then being played, they thought—at Mildale.

At last they seemed to tire of talk, and grew silent.

"Brodie," said Kate, after a while, "doesn't it seem awfully still out there?"

Brodie lifted his head and listened.

Not long before he had heard footsteps, and he supposed the masked guards were still at their posts.

Now he heard nothing.

He rose to his feet and stepped to the door.

Placing his ear to it he listened.

Silence.

"I believe they're gone!" he said, with a thrill of renewed hope.

Kate sprang up and came over to the door.

"I don't hear anything! Yes, they're gone! They're gone! Do you think they'll come back?"

"Turn round here, with your back to me!" he commanded.

He dropped to his knees and began to bite at the cords that bound her wrists.

"If we could get these cords off!"

"Try!" she urged. "Try!"

Brodie tried.

His teeth were good and sharp.

He fairly ate the cords loose, freeing his sister's hands after a while.

"Now untie me!" he said, speaking hurriedly. "We'll get out of here."

When his hands were free, for Kate's nimble fingers made short work of those knots, he looked at his watch.

He had not been robbed; and that he thought rather strange, for he had no high opinion of the boys of Mildale, especially such boys as would go into a thing like this.

He threw his heavy shoulder and his whole weight against the door; shattering it and driving it from its hinges.

"Come!" he said, and took Kate by the hand.

"Which way?"

"To the railroad."

It was not far distant.

They had to get out of the woods, cross the highway, and then run on for a few hundred yards to reach the railroad.

Brodie had a plan, and he told Kate about it as they ran.

The spot where they came out held a little box-like house, in which section men sometimes kept their hand car.

The hand car was on some T-rails by the track, but the house was empty and no section men near. Brodie had hoped to find them there.

"I'm going to take the hand car!" he said, in desperation.

"And get yourself into trouble?"

But her fine eyes were shining.

Her wrists were red where the cords had cut, and she was somewhat exhausted from the effects of her imprisonment and the sharp run; yet the high courage of a spirited girl was revealed, nevertheless, in her face.

"Perhaps we'd better hurry home!" she suggested. "So that papa and mamma may know we're all right, you know."

"I think they got that note. No, I'm going to Mildale, as fast as this old hand car will carry us. I think I can run it out on the track all right."

Kate protested feebly, for she feared he would get into trouble.

Brodie was in a wild and reckless mood.

He looked at his watch again.

"No train along here in either direction for an hour or more, and I can be in Mildale before that. If the fellows are playing, they're right in the middle of the game now. Heavens! how I wish I was there on the rush line! I wonder who they've got in my place?"

He fairly threw the hand car on the track. He seemed to have superhuman strength.

"Pile on!" he commanded.

"Do you think you're doing right?"

"Right or wrong, I'm going to Mildale as quick as I can get there. Pile on!"

Kate piled on, crouching low on the front end of the car to be out of the way of the lever, which Brodie set in motion, after pushing the car a yard or so.

"Let me help you!" she begged.

"No, sit there, and hang on! This is downgrade for a while, and I can work it all right."

The rails began to "clank—clank!" Brodie bent to the work. The "bur-r-r-r" of the car arose as it increased its speed.

Soon Brodie and Kate were flying downgrade toward Mildale.

He was in a fever and a frenzy.

He wanted to be in that rush line.

He wanted to tell the Mildale boys to their teeth what he thought of the conduct he believed them to be guilty of.

Brodie's strength was great; and up and downgrade he sent that little hand car flying.

Kate's hair, loosened by the wind, flew out like the tail of a comet, as the wind drove into her face.

"There she is!" Brodie yelled, frantically working the lever.

They had turned a bend. Mildale was in sight.

Then they saw the football field, saw dimly the charging lines of the players, and the cheering yells of the spectators were swept toward them.

"The game's still on!" he shouted.

And it was still on when Brodie and Kate came hurrying up to the field of battle.

CHAPTER XIV.

VICTORY.

Jack Lightfoot's gridiron boys were battling like giants.

There had been a kick-off, a punt, another punt, and the ball had gone down on Mildale's forty-yard line.

The ball was Cranford's.

Brodie ran out upon the gridiron.

Jack saw him.

"Report to the referee!" he shouted.

Brodie did not have on his football clothing, but he reported to the referee, as the new rules require when a substitute is to go on.

Bob Brewster had been knocked out. He had been literally walked on, as he clung to the legs of the players of the opposition in a previous scrimmage.

Yet, as Jack had no more good substitutes, he was continued in the game, though too weak to be effective.

Reliable old Lafe was still as full of fight and fire as ever; and so was Saul Messenger.

Brodie came into the game in Brewster's place, without a change of clothing. Mildale did not object. In fact, the appearance of Brodie there so took the spirit out of Bud Toliver and those who had been in the conspiracy that they were too astounded to say a word or ask a question.

"Smash the line!" was Jack's signaled order.

The whole eleven of Cranford was now in a yelling and victorious mood, though no sounds came from their lips.

The coming of Brodie seemed to them to presage victory.

Mildale's score was eleven to their ten.

But Mildale must not win!

That was their determination.

"Smash their line!" was Jack's command. Little Nat sent the signals, and passed the ball when it came to him.

Cranford smashed at the line.

With Brodie at his side, Lafe Lampton, backed by Jack and Tom, and the others, tore open the opposing line; and the ball went through for a gain of five yards.

The next play was a dazzler.

Nat Kimball made a feint of giving the ball to Jack, but gave it to Brodie.

Everything was moving in whirlwind order, and the spectators were yelling.

While the rushers and the interference were mixed in the scrimmage, Jack started toward the right end of the line and Brodie toward the left.

Millard Rice was puzzled.

He could not determine, and had not time to determine, which of those two had the ball.

Brodie broke through, and so did Jack.

Millard Rice tackled Jack, thinking it more likely that he had the ball; and, when he did that, he let Brodie get through.

Brodie was heavy, but he could run; and now he went down the field with terrific leaps, the players streaming after him.

Greg Silver, who was a fine runner, and really faster than Brodie, tried to overtake him for a tackle.

But Brodie had already gained ten yards before Silver got under way; and he crossed the line before Silver could come up with him.

They brought the ball out with a rush.

The time, announced not long before, showed that the second half was about to end.

Quickly Lafe placed the ball, and Jack kicked it over the bar.

Cranford had sixteen; Mildale eleven.

The whistle blew not a minute later.

The game had been handsomely won, after all, by Cranford.

The panting and perspiring Cranford players gathered round Brodie.

Saul Messenger swung his hand.

"Hip, hip, hooroar!" squalled Jubal. "Three cheers for Brodie Strawn!"

They were given.

"Three cheers for Kate!" Jack shouted, his face flushed and his eyes bright with excitement.

"Hooroar!" yelled Jubal. "Hip, hip!"

The cheers were given in even a wilder way than before.

"An' three groans," howled Jubal, "fer the gol-darn rascals that kidnaped 'em and so tried to do us up to-day!"

The groans almost shook the ground.

Then with arms locked round each other's shoulders the jubilant Cranford players began to sing:

"Glory, glory halleluyah!
For this is Cranford's day!"

* * * * *

Norwell Strawn was not willing to let it go at that.

His blood was up, and he declared that the scoundrels who had kidnaped and held his son and daughter should be brought to justice.

Strawn's attitude and announced intention of sending the young rascals to the penitentiary if he could, caused a great fright at Mildale.

But, really, nothing could be done.

Neither Brodie nor Kate could identify the fellows who had captured and held them in the hut.

And what Kate had overheard while on her visit at Mildale was not of itself sufficient to warrant the officers of the law in taking action.

But it was a comfort to all of the friends of the Cranford eleven to know that the dastardly scheme had failed as completely as it deserved.

THE END.

Next week's issue, No. 40, will be "Jack Lightfoot's Trap-Shooting; or, Up Against the Champions of the Gun Club." Here is a story that is different from those that have gone before, but you will enjoy it. Do you like a gun, like to shoot, or are you ambitious to become a marksman? Here is a story with the crack of guns in it, the smell of powder, and the flash of exploding cartridges. Besides, it has all the elements of the stories you have come to like in this series. Jack is right in the front rank, and you will want to know what he and his friends aim to do in this new field.

HOW TO DO THINGS

By AN OLD ATHLETE.

Timely essays and hints upon various athletic sports and pastimes, in which our boys are usually deeply interested, and told in a way that may be easily understood. Instructive articles may be found in back numbers of the ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY, as follows: No. 14, "How to Become a Batter." No. 15, "The Science of Place Hitting and Bunting." No. 16, "How to Cover First Base." No. 17, "Playing Shortstop." No. 18, "Pitching." No. 19, "Pitching Curves." No. 20, "The Pitcher's Team Work." No. 21, "Playing Second Base." No. 22, "Covering Third Base." No. 23, "Playing the Outfield." No. 24, "How to Catch." (I.) No. 25, "How to Catch." (II.) No. 26, "How to Run Bases." No. 27, "Coaching and the Coach." No. 28, "How to Umpire." No. 29, "How to Manage Players." No. 30, "Baseball Points." No. 31, "How to Make a Cheap Skiff." No. 32, "Archery." No. 33, "Cross-Country Running." No. 34, "The Game of Lacrosse." No. 35, "The Boy With a Hobby for Collecting." No. 36, "Football, and How to Play It." No. 37, "A Practice Game." No. 38, "How to Play Football—Training."

THE MEN IN THE LINE.

In our previous talks we have discussed the accessories of the game and the clothing to be worn by players, described a practice game and devoted a little consideration to the problem of training. From these talks any beginner should derive a good general idea of the task before his chums and himself, should he decide to organize a team. Practice will bring out many features of the play which it has been impossible to dwell on in these talks; in such instances, the young player has but two sources of solution—reading the rules and watching, if possible, the practice of a team of more experienced players.

Success in football, as in pretty nearly every other sport and occupation, depends largely on condition and intelligence; the man who is in good physical condition can stand hard work, and the man in good mental condition can direct that hard-working body to the accomplishment of whatever he starts out to do. The football player whose every muscle is in thorough working order, whose endurance has been increased by judicious training, who has studied his rules and studied his own play, who has watched the best players in his neighborhood, taken care to look on at the games of older players, and carefully thought out how the game is played, such a fellow is sure to make a successful player, and more than that, a successful leader.

As a leader, his will be the task of selecting his team. As a rule, this is the captain's first duty, and, as a rule, it proves so disagreeable a one that he is not only ready but anxious to give up his post to the first daring and ignorant spirit who wants it. He learns that every hopeful thinks he can be quarter or full-back or center, whatever he has set his eye on; the captain discovers, in the course of his conversation with the various would-be crack men, in what a nest of Solomons he has fallen, how well all his friends understand how to run the team and, with the kindly frankness of boys, what a slob he himself is when it comes to management.

Of course, everyone watching another perform some act which has the glitter of authority is, without knowing it, a little bit jealous, and thinks how much better he could do the work than the other fellow. If the reason for the attitude of his friends proves any consolation to the criticised captain, he has it here and is welcome to it. But the wisest thing for him to do is not to mind the critics at all. Let them croak; when you win, they'll be

the first to come out with a triumphant "I told you so!" Do your best and whistle if your critics grow excited.

When it comes to picking your men, we know of no better way to advise you in the selection of players than by quoting the comments of Walter Camp on the men he selected for his All-America team last year.

For end he enumerates the following qualifications: Heavy weight, unusually fast in getting down the field and great muscular power. Of Shevlin, of Yale, he says: "He gets down the field under kicks as rapidly as any of the lighter men, and is not only sure of his tackle, but his strength and weight are such as to preclude any possibility of the runner knocking him off with his arm or shaking himself free. There is another feature, his ability to run back kick-offs on an open field. He is a student of the game, and does not play in hit-or-miss fashion, but thinks out his method. He can also run with the ball from his position and is an extremely hard man to hold." Of Eckersall, of Chicago, he says: "The man can punt sixty yards, drop-kick with disconcerting accuracy, is a remarkable tackler, and as for running in a broken-up field, he is a wonder." He is "past master of the art of interfering, and in case of a fumble or a muff, is as quick as a cat to retrieve."

For tackle, Camp selects Hogan, of Yale, of whom he says: "He is one of the most difficult tackles for the opponents to send plays through, because he is not a stationary mark, but a moving one. While apparently watching his opponent, he never fails to keep his eye on the ball, and diagnoses the direction of the play with great accuracy; and when he throws his compactly built two hundred pounds of power into the line of attack, he is very apt to pile up the interference or to bowl over the runner himself. Hogan on the offensive was a reliable advance of the ball for short distances, but was particularly good in making openings. His runner could generally rely on the fact that if he followed in Hogan's wake he would not be met by any direct opposition."

In speaking of Cooney, of Princeton, the second tackle, Camp refers to his great strength, and comments on that quality in connection with the position as follows: "One of the great features to be remembered is the tirelessness required of the tackles to-day in the modern game. It is a position where the player must be very alert, but with something more than the watchfulness belonging to the position of end, or half-back, for the tackle must, in every play directed on his side of the line, meet and displace weight."

For the position of guard, the great football coach speaks favorably of three men. Of Kinney, of Yale, he says: "Big, tall, massive, yet in no way muscle-bound, active as a cat and willing to do not only his own work, but, if necessary, the work of a man on either side at a pinch, he was worth everything to his team. He never let up, was always studying the man opposite him, could not be tempted by anything into loss of temper or a momentary failure to remember that the main object of the contest was that Yale should score in the game. Out in the field Kinney on the attack was opening holes for his runners, and on the defense was making it impossible for the opponents to crowd in or through the Yale line."

Of Tripp, of Yale, he says: "He was not as heavy or powerful as Kinney, but played a freer game, and in close quarters could handle himself more actively. He

(Continued on page 30.)

A CHAT WITH YOU

Under this general head we purpose each week to sit around the camp fire, and have a heart-to-heart talk with those of our young readers who care to gather there, answering such letters as may reach us asking for information with regard to various healthy sports, both indoor and out. We should also be glad to hear what you think of the leading characters in your favorite publication. It is the editor's desire to make this department one that will be eagerly read from week to week by every admirer of the Jack Lightfoot stories, and prove to be of valuable assistance in building up manly, healthy Sons of America. All letters received will be answered immediately, but may not appear in print under five weeks, owing to the fact that the publication must go to press far in advance of the date of issue. Those who favor us with correspondence will please bear this in mind, and exercise a little patience.

THE EDITOR.

I have just finished reading No. 29 of your ALL-SPORTS. I think they are great. I have read from No. 6 up to date, and I intend to read ALL-SPORTS as long as it is published. The day is coming when we will look back over our past life and see the fun and adventures we had when a youth. It will seem like a dream to us then. Jack is first with me; then Lafe, Jube and Ned Skeen. The best of all are your baseball stories. What do you think of my measurements? Age, 18 years; height, 5 feet 7½ inches; weight, 146 pounds; waist, 32 inches; across the shoulders, 14 inches; calves, 12½ inches; thigh, 17 inches. What exercise should I take. I run foot races pretty regularly. I will close, with three cheers for Winner Library and Mr. Stevens.

Durant, Ind. Ter.

AN ALL-SPORTS READER.

Your weight is a little above the average, and measurements would indicate that you are a pretty husky youth. We thank you for the bouquets you throw us, and trust that there are others around Durant who consider ALL-SPORTS the best weekly in the world for boys who love outdoor life.

I have been reading the ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY, and I think it is a good book; in fact, the finest book I've ever read. Jack Lightfoot is a smart boy, and also "Old Reliable" Lafe Lampton. He is something like me, for I love apples and peanuts. He is a good baseball player, and is lazy sometimes, but he's all right. Phil Kirtland is getting all right, and also Brodie Strawn. I am something like Jack Lightfoot in believing about jiu-jitsu—it is good for some one who does not know how to fight. Nat Kimball had better leave jiu-jitsu alone and learn something worth knowing. I wish you would tell me whose girl's picture that is on ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY. The boy's picture, I think, must be Jack Lightfoot. I wish Maurice Stevens would write more about the Cranford girls. Is Jack Lightfoot a true character? Please tell me how a boy can get rid of a pain in the side when running. I think I had better close my letter now, with a hurrah for Tom Lightfoot, who, I think, is a good boy. He is like me. I am fond of reading. Hurrah for ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY! Please excuse poor writing on account of bad pen. I hope I will see this letter in ALL-SPORTS.

Arcadia Plantation, Thibodaux, La.

GEORGE BONDREAU.

The pain you speak of may come from indigestion. Perhaps you run too soon after eating. Try running on an empty stomach, and we think you will not find any trouble. As to your question about Jack Lightfoot being a true, everyday American lad, we will say what we have to other inquirers, that undoubtedly Mr. Stevens had some young American in his eye when he painted the character you admire, and that many of the incidents described may be actual happenings, enlarged upon to suit the circumstances.

I have been reading ALL-SPORTS for quite some time, and I like it very well. I would like very much if you would give me your advice on my measurements. Height, 5 feet 3½ inches;

weight, 98 pounds; neck, 12 inches; chest, expanded, 15 inches; natural, 13 inches; shoulders, 18 inches; wrist, 6½ inches. I smoke six little cigars a day. I belong to the Gordan House, and I could take any exercises you would be kind enough to give me. I would like to exchange souvenir postals with any of the readers. Well, hoping this misses Mr. Wastebasket, with three cheers and a tiger for C. H. S., W. L. C. and M. S., I remain,

JOSEPH D. FOGGIO.

59 West Eighth Street, New York City.

You are lacking about eight pounds in weight for a boy of your size. Surely you must have measured your chest the wrong way. Try again, and place the tape all the way around, just at the fullest part. Your chest should measure, normally, about thirty-two inches.

I made a trade one day two weeks ago, and I think it was the best I ever had a hand in. Having some copies of a magazine for boys called the *Captain*, and sent to me by my cousin over in London, I made a dicker with a fellow here, and, with other things, got several old numbers of ALL-SPORTS. I took to it from the start, read each and every number, and as soon as I could get enough money together, had a news dealer send for all the back numbers. They came yesterday, and since then I've just been reading up to my neck in richness. Say, Mr. Stevens is certainly a good writer. I mean to keep on reading his stories as long as they can be had, and that's why I say my trade was the best ever, since it was the means of putting me in touch with such a fine little weekly. You've surely got all the others left at the post, and there's none in the running but ALL-SPORTS. Will you please tell me if one hundred and twenty-three pounds is fair for a boy of sixteen? I am five feet and a half high.

Lexington, Ky.

"KENTUCKY KIT."

Yes, your weight is very good, a bit above the average, too. Your trade was a stroke of genius, or an inspiration, if you please, since it has brought you so much pleasure. We profit, too, in having gained another reader and an admirer as well.

Although I live away down in Florida, I'm a great admirer of your little publication, and the day it arrives by mail is the brightest in the whole week for me. We have sports of our own down here, though of a different kind from those Jack and his friends enjoy. You see, we couldn't try toboggan riding, because that needs a hill and snow, neither of which can be found in this land of sunshine, alligators, palmettoes and "skeeters," and I never was on ice skates in my life, though once or twice I've seen real natural ice, and didn't enjoy it a bit, either, because it liked to ruin our pineapple fields. We have baseball, and we boat all the time. There is plenty of fishing and shooting. I wonder if Jack Lightfoot ever went spearing fish with a fire in a pan in the bow of the boat; or shot a deer by the aid of a jack-light? More than a few times I've speared channel bass weighing thirty pounds, besides sea trout, sheeps-head and drum. And then I wonder could Jack, who is so clever at most things, fling a Spanish cast-net over a school of mullet without losing a tooth; for, you know, we hold one of the leads between the teeth when casting, and unless this is properly done, there may be trouble. I hope he will come down on the Indian River some day and try our sports. Give my best to Mr. Stevens.

Jensen, on Indian River, Fla.

Your letter is breezy and full of information. Perhaps you may have Jack down your way after a bit. Glad you enjoy your weekly treat, and hope to hear from you again.

I have read the ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY from No. 1 to No. 26, and I can say that it is the best weekly I have ever read. Jack Lightfoot is a "peach," and steady old Lafe Lampton is all right. I would like to ask a few questions. 1. On the cover of every ALL-SPORTS there are two pictures, one a boy and one

a girl. Could you tell me who they are? 2. Do you think jiu-jitsu is a fair way of fighting? 3. I would like to know if you are going to print any war stories. 4. What State is Cranford in? 5. Is Jack Lightfoot going to play football this winter? With best wishes to Jack Lightfoot and his friends, I remain, Thibodaux, La.

E. C. McCALLUM, JR.

1. One picture, of course, is supposed to be of our hero, Jack Lightfoot. The girl—well, read the stories as they appear, and make up your mind who she should be.

2. We have given our opinion of jiu-jitsu before, and it agrees with what the author of these stories has said.

3. War stories could not properly come under the head of ALL-SPORTS, unless you chose to class the football series as such. We believe we can introduce sufficient excitement without leaving our chosen field.

4. In New England.

5. By this time you will have found that several football stories have already been published, with more to follow.

What I like about the stories in ALL-SPORTS is the human interest they contain. Perhaps quite a few writers can give as exciting baseball or sporting stories as Maurice Stevens, but it would be hard to find his equal when it comes to picturing characters so true to life that you have to pull yourself together every now and then in order to understand they are fiction after all. I guess that must be the stamp of a true artist, just as only the best of painters are able to catch the expression on a person's face. Our author knows the failings, as well as the good points, of boys, too, you bet. He seems to just touch us all on the raw. I know that more than a few times I've felt that he was scoring me personally for my faults, and reading about how Jack overcame his has set me to work doing the same. I think the influence of your publication is grandly to the good. Many will have cause to thank you for having, in a silent way, aroused the better part of their nature, so that they gave up mean faults and took delight in pursuing a manly course in life. Well, I must close or else you'll be giving this over to the office goat. Thanking you again for giving me so much pleasure in the entertaining stories contained in ALL-SPORTS, I remain,

La Fayette, Ind.

BRADLEY GREENER.

It certainly looks as though you know and appreciate a good thing when you see it, Bradley; and we hope to merit your approval for a long time to come, as well as that of your friends.

The Jack Lightfoot stories are all right—none better—but they seem rather short. Can't you have them longer? They are so good that I'd like more of them.

J. C. M.

Gloucester, Mass.

This is a good kind of complaint. But did you ever stop to think that the reason the stories seem short is because they are so interesting? It is dullness which makes a story seem long. They are the same length as the famous Frank Merriwell stories, and are really so long that three of them would make a \$1.50 cloth-bound book. And they are not hastily written trash, but good, lively, clean stories, as fine as anything published in cloth, and much more interesting and up-to-date than most cloth-bound books selling at a high price. We give our readers the very best there is—first-class, well-written, intensely interesting stories, dealing with all manner of boys' sports—a dollar-and-a-half's worth of the best of boys' reading for fifteen cents. It is a compliment to have our readers think the stories are short, when actually they are of a very generous length, and, with the added pages of Chat, and valuable information, make the excellent weekly you see.

I notice a great many are writing and telling how much they like ALL-SPORTS, so I thought, as I had been a constant reader from No. 1, I would do the same. The stories are certainly fine, better than any it has ever been my luck to get hold of. To say I enjoy them is drawing it mild. Even my little brother, not over eight years of age, devours them—of course, after me. I've only one little criticism to make, and perhaps you may think I'm a crank in that line, but is it entirely necessary to

bring in the drinking habits of some of the bad boys, as has been done in several of the stories? I know the moral is plainly painted, so that he who reads may take warning, and perhaps I'm foolish for mentioning this, but I just wondered if it was just the thing. Don't imagine I am criticising Mr. Stevens, for, in my mind, he is the best writer of boys' stories in the country. Woburn, Mass.

E. A. P.

In the first place, you understand that all manner of boys enter into a story to make it natural, and the author feels bound to describe some of the traps and pitfalls that lie in the road for young lads. He does not do this in a sense of making such scenes attractive, but always to the contrary. It is not pleasant reading, perhaps, but we know of numbers of young fellows who had been brought to realize the inevitable result of bad habits that were fastening upon them through reading just such descriptions. Mr. Stevens tries to do his duty manfully, and you will find that the only attributes he glorifies in these delightful stories are in the line of an upright character, a determination to succeed honestly in the battle of life, and sobriety in all things.

(*"How to do Things"*)—Continued from page 28.

was a brainy player, absolutely quiet, ignoring everything that went on that was not of interest to him as a player, but missing nothing that had any bearing on the game. He was a man who could be worked harmoniously into team play, and had it been necessary, Tripp could have run with the ball effectively." Of Riekarski, of Pennsylvania, Camp speaks in terms of the most enthusiastic praise, pointing out that, in addition to his strength, endurance and skill, "when any distance was absolutely necessary to secure, Riekarski could be relied upon to take the ball or to make such a wide opening in the opposing line that anybody else could take it and go through with it."

The position of center usually goes to some heavy player, with weight enough about him to anchor him to his place. The last few years, however, have seen an increasing number of light centers. Camp selects one heavy man and one who is lighter.

"Tipton, the West Point center," he says, "has to his credit the giving of more trouble to opposing lines and back fields than any other center of the year. This was not true alone in his breaking through, but also in his ability to aid in heavy plays, to open a weak spot between center and guard, and finally to be in such a position as to make it difficult for the opposing center trio to assume the best positions to bother West Point after the play started. In addition to this, he fed the ball well to his quarter and was steady and accurate in passing for kicks of all kinds. Torrey, of Pennsylvania, was the type of lighter center, and, thanks to his aggressiveness and the support from his guards, he is quite able to carry the position. He is a clever, steady, reliable man, active all the time and remarkably good on defense, considering his weight."

This selection covers only the line, and has been quoted here in order that the beginner might learn the qualities that had made the star men in the game famous. As has been seen, weight and strength are absolutely necessary in the line. Combined with these physical qualifications, we find, in all the players mentioned above, a knowledge of the game, a power of endurance and the alertness to notice every opportunity and the intelligence to make good. Your line man must have both brains and brawn, and plenty of each.

Next week we shall consider the men behind the line.

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